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# THE INDWELLING SPIRIT



THE  
INDWELLING SPIRIT

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## PREFACE

THE following pages obviously do not contain a systematic treatment of the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit. They contain suggestions only, not a comprehensive survey of a great—properly speaking, an illimitable—subject. Greater completeness in the study of this topic is indeed most desirable, but perhaps completeness of plan and systematic outline are not the chief requisites in an attempt to describe the influence upon the human spirit of that Divine Breath which bloweth where it listeth, and whose chief characteristic it is to surpass human thought and expectation. Complaints have been frequently made as to the lack of adequate treatment of this central doctrine of Christianity, a deficiency largely remedied of late by works such as are named in the selected list of books that follows.

The Holy Spirit is God imparting Himself directly to the consciousness and experience of men. Hence the subject is approached in this volume from the side of experience, rather than of dogma; of Biblical exposition, rather than of philosophical discussion; of life and practice, rather than of theological speculation. An attempt is, however, indirectly made to show that the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit meets the needs and claims of modern religious life better than certain philosophico-religious theorizings

that ignore or disparage the teaching of the New Testament. The connection between the various chapters which compose the book, though not logically close, is real and vital; and it will be seen that some of the chief aspects of the work of the Spirit that are of present-day importance have been either directly or indirectly treated. The writer's deep conviction is, that greater emphasis needs to be laid upon God's work *in* man, the presence of Christ, by and through the Holy Spirit, in the hearts and lives of Christians, even if it be at the expense of interesting questions of doctrine that are of necessity largely speculative.

The substance of Chapters XII, XIII and XIV has been delivered in the form of sermons on special occasions, and the style of spoken address has not been altered. Part of Chapter XV was given at a meeting of the National Free Church Council, whilst Chapter XVI originally appeared as an article in the *London Quarterly Review*, and I am indebted to the courtesy of the Editor for permission to re-publish it. All these portions of the book are reproduced at the instance of those who had previously heard or read them. The bearing of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit upon the myriad forms of mystical religion, referred to in the last chapter, has, of necessity, been only touched in passing. It deserves careful and continuous treatment.

*Richmond,*  
*February, 1911.*

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## DIVINE IMMANENCE

*“Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?  
Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?”*—PS. cxxxix. 7.

*“God is Spirit . . . in essence simple, in powers various,  
wholly present in each and being wholly everywhere; . . .  
shared without loss of ceasing to be entire, after the likeness  
of the sunbeam, whose kindly light falls on him who enjoys it,  
yet illumines land and sea and mingles with the air.”*—BASIL.

*“To find God everywhere, you must everywhere seek for  
nothing but Him.”*—RUYSBROEK.

*“No picture to my aid I call,  
I shape no image in my prayer;  
I only know in Him is all  
Of life, light, beauty everywhere,  
Eternal Goodness here, and there.”*—WHITTIER.

# 1

## DIVINE IMMANENCE

WHAT is the Christian view of God and the world, especially of the relation which God continually maintains to the world which He has brought into being? An Atheist finds no meaning in the question, because he denies the existence of God; an Agnostic asserts that if such a Being exists, it is impossible that man should know anything about Him. In practice, an Atheist may mean only to deny that the evidence is strong enough to prove the existence of the Theist's God; and Agnosticism in the person of Herbert Spencer, one of its best representatives, admits so much in relation to that Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed, that his exposition might include a considerable part of natural theology. Still, it is vain to discuss with atheist or agnostic the exact relation between "God" and the world, when there is so small a measure of agreement as to the very meaning of the word.

Dualism and Polytheism, as forms of religious belief, hardly exist among civilized nations to-day. According to them the ultimate Ground of Reality in the universe is either Two or Many. The Zoroastrian holds that the facts of the physical and moral worlds point to rival ultimate powers of life and death, good and evil. The Pagan does not pass beyond the idea of many Divine powers, amongst which some measure of subordination, or co-ordina-

tion, may be discernible, but the Manifold refuses to be entirely brought into relation with the One, or under its control. These forms of belief belong to ancient rather than to modern history, or to existing nations and tribes that have come least under the influences of modern Western civilization. Whether an exception ought to be made of the doctrine of philosophical Pluralism advocated by Professor W. James need not be at the moment discussed. Broadly speaking, it may be said that thinkers of the modern age are prepared to accept unity as the basis of reality, though the methods of harmonizing the One in whom, or in which, they believe with the Manifold, obvious to the senses and the understanding, vary almost indefinitely with the philosophical or religious systems adopted.

A prevailing tendency in the thought of the time is to emphasize unity in the universe at the expense of multiplicity. Pantheism, indigenous in the East, may not be in set terms accepted as a creed by many Western thinkers, but Pantheistic tendencies, philosophical rather than religious—for Pantheism, properly speaking, is more philosophical than religious—prevail in many diverse quarters. Monism is a name which covers fundamentally different creeds. These agree in the doctrine of One only substance in the universe; be it matter, or spirit, or one “stuff” with double aspect. Whether Monism, strictly speaking, is compatible with Theism may be questioned. Understanding by Theism, in the words of one of its best modern exponents, a belief in “a personal self-existent Being, infinite in power and wisdom and perfect in holiness and goodness, the Maker of heaven and earth,” it is opposed both to materialistic and idealistic Monism. But the preva-

lence of these latter systems in our time brings the Theist face to face with the question raised at the outset. If the existence of One living personal God, creator of all, be admitted, what is His continuous relation to the universe He has brought into being?

## I

The chief conflict of Theism in the West to-day is not against rival religions, but against "world-views" which either dispense with religion altogether, or attempt to provide a substitute for it, or use the word in a sense which the Theist cannot accept. It is of no use to denounce these alternative theories, or to ignore them as unworthy of the consideration of a religious man; it must be shown that Theism accounts more completely for the facts of life, and is itself a more living and potent force in the thought of our time than any other hypothesis of world-existence. This can hardly be done without a clear understanding of what is meant by the phrase which is now before us—the Immanence of God in His own universe.

Naturalism, as one prevailing method of regarding the universe has come to be called, identifies reality with nature, nature with science, and science with physical science. By nature is to be understood the whole of things viewed from the standpoint of mechanical causation. Allied to Positivism in maintaining the doctrine that nothing is knowable except phenomena, Naturalism meets the prevailing desire for a unity of principle pervading the cosmos as a whole, makes man the creature of conditions, the product of evolutionary forces, and so far as it contains a doctrine of man, emphasizes the importance of his

own energy and activity, not his dependence on a higher power. One important side of life as we know it is undeniably represented by this doctrine, but the question is whether justice is done to the whole, and especially the higher, part of it. When Naturalism is examined it is found to be an abstraction ; its victories—many, great and abiding—have been gained because, for the sake of investigating “nature” thoroughly, certain leading factors of actual existence have been for the time eliminated, in order that the work of “science” might be the better done. The “laws” of science are symbols only, shorthand notes, abstract formulæ, admirably calculated for the purpose for which they have been framed, but representing only certain aspects of the many-sided reality which man seeks to study and understand. Naturalism fails to recognize the relation of its science as a whole to consciousness, freedom, and those higher instincts and capacities which are at least as much a part of “nature” as the unquestionable facts on which it insists.

An opposite tendency, sometimes known by the vague and ambiguous name of Idealism, makes the intellect dominant in the interpretation of God and the world, and with Hegel holds that Thought is Reality and Reality is Thought. All is subordinate to the development of the Idea, a process of system-making from the standpoint of thought, which takes little account of the external, except as material out of which to furnish forth an abstract plan which alone possesses reality and abides. In essence Idealism is opposed to Naturalism, yet the two are found sometimes in strange, yet quite intelligible, combination. Joined together in a period of high culture, they constitute Humanism, which treats the world of nature

and thought, of which man forms a part, as the whole of things, with man himself as centre and crown. Humanism denies the existence of a world beyond our own, a life beyond the grave, and a reality beyond phenomena so far as our faculties can take us, and therefore it denies the relevancy of the question, What is the relation between God and the world? For though it is professedly theistic and often uses the word God, He is not regarded as over the world, or over-against the world, or other than the world—only as the whole viewed from a given standpoint. God is an idea, says one such modern writer, “which serves to generalize and idealize all the values one knows”; “the word involves a living process, law, or movement, in the working of which human needs are satisfied, justice and truth established, and distant ideals attained.” Room is left in this doctrine for the emphasis which some would lay on the greatness of the individual, or for the supreme claim which others make for society and the race; but in either case man becomes a god to himself, or else the whole of which man forms the crowning element is worshipped, if any place be found for worship at all.

Hence a growing and deepening world-weariness. The unsatisfying character of much of the most “advanced” teaching of our time is notorious, and it is due to the fact that religion has so far lost its real power. Sir John Seeley’s *Natural Religion*, though published many years ago, remains still one of the best representatives of a current quasi-theistic world-view characteristic of the later nineteenth and opening twentieth century. It is because Eucken, as a philosopher and quite apart from Christian orthodoxy, has pointed out this failure with so much clearness and power, that many are turning to him as

a teacher of promise and inspiration. He says, "A weariness of the world and a deep dislike to its limitations are becoming more and more general. We feel that life must forfeit all meaning and value if man may not strive towards some lofty goal in dependence on a Power that is higher than man, and, as he reaches forward, realize himself more fully than he could ever do under the conditions of sense-experience. Cut off from the larger life of the universe, and shut up in a sphere of his own, he is condemned to an unbearably narrow and paltry existence, and the deeps of his own nature are locked away from him."<sup>1</sup> It is his way of looking at life which so often puts the man of culture out of his place, and therefore out of gear. He is not really self-sufficing, but dependent. The race as a whole is not its own end, is not really isolated, but bound up with a higher Order. The individual is not transient, but immortal; God has "put eternity in his heart." Modern attempts, such as Seeley's, to substitute awe in the presence of nature, and the solidarity of the human race for true worship of, and communion with, the living God, have proved unavailing. The conception of human nature thus implied is faulty and deficient; and that deficiency, only too manifest in some of the highest and best thought of our generation, Theism professes to supply.

## II

The introduction of the term "worship" begs a large question which it is not our object now to discuss. The position here taken is that religion necessarily implies an adequate object of worship, that for a personal being such as man a personal object is

<sup>1</sup> *Meaning and Value of Life*, pp. 57, 58.

needed, and that, rightly speaking, neither Pantheism, nor Monism of any type, materialistic or idealistic, leaves room for worship. It is fundamental with the Theist to maintain the existence of Another than man, Highest of all, on whom we depend, to whom moral obligation is due, and who forms at the same time the Source, the Sustainer, and the Goal of all existence.

It is not denied that difficult questions arise—some of them probably far beyond our answering—as to the relation between a personal God and nature as we know it. The Theist sums up his reply to these questions by the use of two words, Transcendence and Immanence, which must be combined in order to define the full relation. The immanence of God implies that God is everywhere and always present in the universe, that from no conceivable corner of it is He absent, nor is He separated from its life, but that He informs, inhabits, pervades, as well as sustains and holds together, the whole. His transcendence implies, not that He is outside the universe, but that He is not shut up within it, not limited by it. Whilst He informs nature, He infinitely surpasses it, and while always within it, He is always independent of it, and able with infinite power and wisdom to act upon that which He Himself has brought into being and ever sustains in all its parts and operations.

There is no contradiction between the two attributes thus defined, though it may not always be easy to maintain them together and observe a just proportion in their mutual relations. The word, however, which calls for special study, and on which special emphasis is laid to-day, is Immanence. Why is it made prominent? Why has it largely taken the place of Omnipresence as a Divine attribute? Does its frequent use

imply any change in the prevalent ideas of religion, or in the relation of God to the world around us and within us? And, especially in view of "new theologies," which are to be "re-articulated in terms of the Immanence of God," are there any dangers in the use of the word which must be avoided, any limits which must be laid down, if the teaching of the doctrine is not to slide imperceptibly into Pantheism?

The reason for the prevalence of the word in this century is not far to seek. Undue insistence on Divine transcendence puts God too far away from His own universe. Judaism, especially later Judaism, in unfolding the majesty of God, magnified His transcendence. Islam follows on similar lines. The Deism of the eighteenth century virtually proclaimed an absentee Deity, one mighty enough to bring worlds into existence, wise enough to lay down laws for their regulation, and then cold and careless enough to leave them to the working of the secondary laws He had established, vouchsafing no special revelation of His will, still less providing a Saviour for a sinning and suffering race. The God of the Deist was a mighty Architect, a great Lawgiver, a sovereign Ruler, an all-wise Judge: the world is the work of His hands, the product of His creative energy. But within the universe He is represented only by law and order, and by the principles of beneficent government; in the actual working of the world the living God has disappeared, and the one thing men in the eighteenth century could not believe was that God is "not far from"—*i. e.* most near to—"every one of us." The Omnipresence of such a God was, indeed, in theory taught, but, as Dr. Martineau expresses it, "in that Divine infinitude there is a death-like coldness; so long as it is only a passive, though it be an observant

presence brooding over every field of thought, it is but Space with eyes, that can never leave us within or without, yet will never help us, or so much as return a whisper to our cry.”<sup>1</sup>

In the nineteenth century a great change passed over all Western thought in these high matters. Nature ceased to be a machine, and was understood to be an organism. Further, if the name God was to have any meaning at all, it was felt that nature must be the organized expression of His indwelling will, not a mere remote product of His almighty fiat. “From no part of its space, from no moment of its time, is His living agency withdrawn, or less intensely present than in any crisis fitly called creative.” Wordsworth, at the opening of the century, anticipated, as poets are used to do, results more slowly reached by science. He taught the earlier nineteenth century how to discern

“A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
 Of something far more deeply interposed,  
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
 And the round ocean and the living air,  
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
 A motion and a spirit, that impels  
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
 And rolls through all things.”

Before the end of the century the idea of the reign of law had spread, and order had been traced everywhere until men could no longer entertain the idea of a God who manifested Himself only at exceptional crises, who was manifest mainly in “gaps” and “breaks” and exceptions. For the religious man nature had come to be a living robe of God indeed, continually depending upon and upheld by the living presence of Him, without whose informing energy and

<sup>1</sup> *Study of Religion*, Vol. II, p. 171.

wisdom the whole would collapse and disappear. By the end of last century it was clearly understood not only that all things were made by Him, but that in Him all things consist.

### III

This position indicates a clear advance in religious thought and feeling. True Theists cried out, not for less of God, but for more; they refused to be satisfied without a God of whom it might be said He in all and all in Him. But in what sense? For confusion of thought here is easy, and just discrimination very difficult. Wordsworth was by some accounted a Pantheist, and Tennyson was not afraid to profess a "Higher Pantheism." Some, like Dr. Allanson Picton, began with "Christian Pantheism"—whatever such a paradoxical phrase might mean—but, naturally enough, ere long dropped the epithet and professed the Pantheistic creed entire. Pantheism is not so much an abyss into which men fall without intending it, as an atmosphere which encompasses them, and which they breathe without knowing it. It has been said that "Christianity, if it is to triumph over Pantheism, must absorb it," but what if Pantheism absorbs Christianity in the process? It is possible, though not always easy, to preserve the Pantheism of the best mystics and the mediæval hymn, "Intra cuncta nec inclusus, Extra cuncta nec exclusus, Extra totus complectendo, Intra totus es implendo." Immanence may be maintained without teaching either that all is God and identifying the being of the creature with His, or that God is all, that He has no being above and beyond the universe.

But confusion has arisen in the use of the word,

partly through not sufficiently distinguishing between God's relation to inorganic nature and to organized and sentient life on the one hand, and, on the other, His relation to the higher, voluntary life of man. Further, the essential difference between the relation of God to man in nature and in grace must never be lost sight of, if His indwelling in humanity is to be adequately understood.

But the chief line of cleavage lies between spiritual and non-spiritual existence. The relation of God who is Spirit to creatures whom He has made spirits in His own likeness is obviously different from any that He can entertain to inorganic creation or the lower organic creatures around. There are schools of thought that reject the very idea of spirit in the life of man, and with these we are not now concerned. But it is unquestionably difficult in our time to preserve this central landmark clear and firm amidst the inrolling tides of naturalistic world-views. Eucken is surely right when he urges that one main struggle of the present generation is "that which we have to wage for a spiritual centre for our civilization and a perception of the meaning and value of life." It is essentially a new kind of life when spirit appears on the scene, and "its construction of a world from within, with its own particular contents, value and order, can never be the work of man by himself. It is only to be understood as a movement of the whole of reality itself which surrounds man, takes hold of him and drives him on."<sup>1</sup> Not only does man as spirit distinguish the I from the not-I, he is able to transcend these distinctions and pass to a higher unity which transcends all "nature."

It is obvious that the problem of Immanence arises

<sup>1</sup> *Spirit of Life*, pp. 17, 18.

specially here. God is in nature, not spatially, but as Spirit, directing and controlling, the Source of all, Sustainer of all, moving and impelling to a goal which nature knows not, which He only knows. Only a part of the Divine nature—if the expression may be allowed—can be operative and manifested in this region. Power, Wisdom, Beneficence can be displayed, but no conscious response on the part of the creature is possible. The world viewed as a mechanical product is one thing, as the nursery of a world of spirits it is quite another. Religion tells of such a world of spirits, dependent on God for existence as are other finite creatures, but each possessing, because He has bestowed it, a nature which separates him from nature and allies him to God; which enables him to say, Thou and I. Hence arises conscious dependence, the possibility of communion and of alienation, obligation from without, compliance from within, the power of resistance, reconciliation, renewal. The world of spirits is the training ground of the moral creation.

If the Immanence of God be asserted here, where most of all it is needed, it must be with all due regard to the conditions of the case. How is God related to the world of finite spirits? All men are apt to think in metaphors, and even philosophers would teach in metaphors drawn from nature, which may confuse rather than illumine. Analogies taken from the sun and its rays, from fountain and stream, from root, stem and branches, must be strictly limited in their application to personal life.

Divine Immanence in the human spirit is not of thought, or intellect, alone, as Spinoza and Hegel, and to some extent T. H. Green, taught, each in his own fashion. Neither is it one of feeling alone, as Schleier-

macher was understood to maintain. It is not one of will alone, as Kant would seem to intimate in his doctrine of the Practical Reason, resolving religion into morality and the right conduct of life in obedience to the Divine will. The whole of human nature must be included in its various relations to that Divine Being who is not mere Intelligence, mere Power, mere Beneficence, but the Highest Life of all, the only real and complete Personality in the universe. He possesses a personal life in its unimaginable perfection and has entrusted His high gift in a measure to some of His creatures, that they may continually press forward towards its fuller realization. The Divine Spirit is at the same time God *over* all human spirits, *around* them and *within* them—each word to be maintained with equal weight and strenuousness. To apprehend, maintain, enjoy and extend that many-sided relation constitutes the true life of the finite spirit through all its history.

This implies a human self, a world of “selves.” But what is to be understood by the word? It cannot mean the subjective experience of the passing moment, and the principle of continuity is not easy to describe. Do we as yet “possess our souls,” or are we in process of “acquiring” them? The differing translations of Luke xxi. 19 suggest a distinction which may, or may not, be implied in the Greek, but it must never be lost sight of in the study of humanity. Every “self” in the finite creation is, as Aristotle expressed it, *δύναμις* passing into *ἐνέργεια*, a capacity developed into a mode of activity through assimilation and conquest. The life of the spirit implies a “being for self,” but by its very constitution it implies something more. Eucken has nobly vindicated this fundamental position, but it may be questioned whether he allows sufficiently for

the individuality which forms the germ of growth and development. He contends that it is in virtue of "spirit" that each man possesses the capacity of unbounded assimilation in the spiritual world. But he passes rapidly on to urge that this "selfhood" is a "point of view" from which the whole universe is apprehended, and without that universe in action selfhood has no meaning. It is personal action on which he insists, so that his system is most distinctively styled Activism. The principle of personality with him is "not a mere state of personal experience which exists in entire indifference to objective fact, but a life of action which includes and envelops an objectivity within itself, and transfigures it in so doing."<sup>1</sup>

When the relation of the human spirit to the Divine is considered, a refuge from difficulties is often found by describing it as "mystical" in character. Into the various senses of that much abused word it is not necessary here to enter; more may be found upon the subject in Chapter XVI. But it must imply that the individual spirit is brought into immediate contact with the Infinite Spirit, that being the very kernel of mystical doctrine. And true Theism, not to say Christianity, steers a middle course between a mere external action of the Divine discerned by certain effects of grace in the human spirit on the one hand, and an absorption of the human in the Divine upon the other, in such wise that the innermost centre of the human soul becomes Divine. Vital union implies a close relation in which, the finite creatureliness of the soul being never forgotten, and its distinct, though not independent, existence being preserved, God can infuse true life into the soul from within in varying degrees according to the capacity of each soul to

<sup>1</sup> Gibson, *Rudolf Eucken's Philosophy of Life*, p. 94.

receive, and its fidelity in using the measure of Divine Presence already vouchsafed. Such union and communion is made closer and more intimate by the conscious, willing, eager surrender of the finite to the Infinite Spirit, this very surrender being maintained by the communicated strength of all-encompassing Divine energy. But communion is not absorption. Immanence is not identity. Rapture is not extinction of individual being. Rather is the true nature of each distinct Finite Self more and more fully realized as it experiences the Divine indwelling. As Browning says, "man is not Man as yet"; the inchoate self becomes the Self by union with the Divine.

"Our wills are ours, we know not how,  
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine."

Communion implies two beings, however lofty the one and insignificant the other. There may be communion in silence as well as in speech, but communion there must be, or the distinctive glory which God has given the highest creature known on earth is lost. Man does not rise in the scale of being by approximating to the passive and unconscious from the consciously active state. The inspiration of the prophet is not at its highest when he is compared to an unconscious lyre struck by the fingers of the musician; still less if he should undergo an utter loss of identity, as when a drop of water disappears in the ocean. But the Divine communion which implies the highest exercise of the human spirit is quite consistent with Divine action within, as well as without, the soul—a Divine energizing which "wells up" in consciousness, as the sap in the tree, the source and supply of all its life.

In the natural world the force which impels the sap

upwards acts counter to gravitation ; "capillary attraction" may be described, but not explained. The power in the roots and stems and twigs of the growing plant or tree to draw moisture upwards may be described as "surface tension," or "cohesion acting as a force at insensible distances," but such phraseology covers our ignorance of the principle by which life is maintained in a million trees of the forest, as in the cattle on a thousand hills. Physical illustrations carry a very short distance when used to expound personal relations. It is enough that God, who "stands as it were a hand-breadth off to give room for the newly-made to live," does also so abide in the human spirit if it will unfold itself to His presence, that the new life, distinct but not separate from the life of God, may be lived from Him, in Him and unto Him increasingly for ever.

#### IV

Thus far religious philosophy, but what of the Christian position? Religion may be viewed as giving a law for conduct, as embodied in ceremonial worship, as a creed for the intellect and for faith ; or as implying a certain significance, purpose and goal in the scheme and history of the world. It is from the last point of view that we have now to regard Christianity. It is unquestionably a religion, not to say *the* religion, of redemption. The idea of a complete renewal of nature as necessary for all men lies at its very root. The possibility of such renewal is taught in its characteristic doctrine of Incarnation, the method of renewal in the doctrines of Atonement, Justification and Sanctification, the climax being

found in a proclamation of Resurrection and Life Everlasting.

The part of Christian teaching with which we are now concerned, however, is the mode in which Divine Redeeming Energy is exerted in the human spirit. A Mediator is implied. In the twentieth century such a doctrine is not popular. Men are so engrossed with "the course of this world," research into nature and control of its resources, the mutual relations of society in political, industrial, commercial and international life, they are so anxious to exploit their own powers, and those of others, in the development of materials within their reach, that they resent the idea of Salvation through Another, the need of revelation, mediation, vicarious suffering and redemption. If the gaze must be turned back at all two thousand years, it is enough to find a great Exemplar—always reserving the rights and powers of the present generation—but not a Saviour. There can, however, be no question, if Christianity be true, that a Saviour is needed, that one has appeared in history, and signs are not wanting that the characteristic self-sufficiency of our age is in certain directions being broken down, and the need of Christ as a Saviour for the world is increasingly felt and acknowledged.

Be that as it may, such is the burden of the Christian Gospel. A new relation of the individual to God and a new order of the world are necessary. This work must be carried on here and now in renewed personalities. No new substance of human nature is necessary, its existing substance is not evil, but its bias, tendency, scope and aim are bent and dwarfed, and man's powers can only be renewed as his relations to God and his fellows are rectified. Hence mere Theistic doctrine does not suffice for

world-renewal, but Theism with a special revelation culminating in Christ. The work of reconciliation is already effected, the message is declared, "to wit that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." But the meaning and power of this can only be realized by faith on man's part and the energizing of the Holy Spirit on God's part. The believer is brought into closer relation with God than is possible to any other human being, a relation described as the Spirit's indwelling rather than Divine immanence, the latter phrase being postulated of creation as a whole and especially of mankind as the highest creature on the face of the earth. No man is, or can be, outside the reach of these general influences of the Holy Spirit. But He is now manifested as the Spirit of Christ, with special characteristics and operations realizable only by faith in Christ. Under these conditions the "indwelling of the Spirit" acquires a meaning which cannot be understood outside Christian experience, and that experience finds its consummation in the present life; not in some Nirvana or absorption into Deity, but in that state of "entire sanctification" which means nothing more, and nothing less, than perfect love to God and man.

Under what conditions is this process of renewal of the human spirit in communion with the Divine possible? The Christian answer is through God the Holy Spirit, spoken of as the third Person in the Trinity. This may seem to be explaining the obscure by the more obscure, and it has sometimes been so taught as to darken rather than illumine a sacred theme. But let us examine it more closely. The doctrine of the Trinity is described as a "mystery," and such it undoubtedly is if the word be rightly

understood in the New Testament sense. It does not mean that which in itself is unintelligible, or self-contradictory, or irrational, but that which has been only partly revealed, or is only partially understood, because of the imperfect capacity of those who receive it. As a revelation from God to man, a mystery is that which can be apprehended, though not comprehended; that which for a while was for good reasons hidden, or which, when made known, appeals only to those who are prepared by their own training and experience to receive it. The Trinity is a "mystery," as the Personality of God held by the Theist is a mystery, or it might even be said as the personality of man held by the man in the street is a mystery. For he who understands the "flower in the crannied wall, root and all, and all in all," may understand what God and man is.

The attempt to conceive Absolute Personality is surrounded by difficulties—metaphysical, emotional, moral. If there is an absolute Subject, this would seem to imply a corresponding eternal Object; even Aristotle asks what God contemplates, and answers Himself. So with love and all other moral relations. If these belong in any real sense to the eternal essence of the Godhead, they require an object. Dr. Martineau would find such an object in an eternal universe, but this would interfere with the fundamental self-existence of the Godhead and make Him as much dependent on the universe as the universe is on Him. It is more reasonable—understanding by reason the human spirit exercising itself on high themes largely beyond its ken—to suppose that these moral and emotional relations are interior to the Godhead, that the Deity is not a bare, solitary unit, as set forth by the Mohammedan and the Unitarian Theist, but Him-

self a home of social relations. As Dr. Illingworth puts it, He exists "in a mode of which the family, the unit of human society, is the created and faint reflection. . . . A person is as essentially a social, as he is an individual, being; he cannot be realized, he cannot become his true self, apart from society: and personality having this plural implication, solitary personality is a contradiction in terms." As another writer has expressed it—"The question of theology was: What is God? And the answer was: God is a fellowship, a communion of persons." Dr. Moberly goes so far as to say, "I am not sure that this is not the one thing in respect of Divine Personality of which we can with most unfailing certainty be said to have a real intellectual grasp. We see not merely that an inherent mutuality is authoritatively implied or revealed. We can see that it is intellectually impossible that it should be otherwise. We can see that Eternal Personality, without mutual relation in itself, could not be Eternal Personality after all."<sup>1</sup>

The words now used in the orthodox creeds to express this truth may, or may not, be the best to convey the idea. Words change their meaning in process of time and no translation can convey the exact meaning of the original. The doctrine of "Three Persons" suggests to the English mind the idea of Tritheism, and "one substance" might savour of materialism. The time-honoured phrase, admirably devised when it was coined, "neither confusing the Persons, nor dividing the Substance," conveys little meaning to the non-theological mind. If "persons" are individuals, mutually exclusive, the word is not applicable to the Deity. But a Personal God for the Trinitarian means

<sup>1</sup> Illingworth, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, pp. 143, 144, 256; Moberly, *Atonement and Personality*, p. 165.

One indivisible Personality so much richer than ours that what we need to find in others He finds in Himself. The three "hypostases" in the Godhead are more than three aspects, more than three characteristic functions, of one personality; they are three substances, the position and function of each of which presupposes the position and function of each of the others as members of one organic whole. Each is necessary to the other and indissolubly blended in a Unity ineffably higher than the organic unity of the individual, as that is indescribably higher than the unity constituted by each plant or animal around us.

The Father is the Source and Origin of all. He does not reveal Himself immediately, either in creation or redemption, but always through the Son. The Son is the revealing principle of the Divine existence, the organ and medium of all creation. From within He is the *χαρακτήρ τῆς ψυχής*, the "impress of the substance" of the Father, and in revelation He is the effulgence of His glory, the beginning and the end in mediation and redemption. The position and function of the Spirit, with which we are now especially concerned, is not that of ultimate source, nor does it imply the accomplishment of the actual work of redemption, but He is throughout the "formative and glorifying principle," in Creation, in History, in the Incarnation, in Redemption, in the formation and development of the individual Christian and the Church, in the accomplishment of all Divine designs for the whole world. The will is of the Father, accepted and revealed by the Son, fulfilled by the Spirit—God over us, God for us, God in us. The Spirit is the executing power of the Godhead; "by His immanent plastic activity He unfolds and brings forth into realization and progressively to complete manifesta-

tion the Divine idea of the kingdoms of the universe, the natural and ethical,"<sup>1</sup> in nature, providence and grace. In all realms it is through the Holy Spirit that possibilities in the creature become realities, so that each is to be brought through processes of growth and development to ultimate perfection and glory.

It may be that in such speculations we are trying to "wind ourselves too high for sinful man below the sky"; that of the interior relations of the Godhead we can think nothing, understand nothing, imagine nothing. But surely, if we use the name of God at all, it is more reasonable to conceive of the Author of all personal beings as personal than as impersonal. And, in trying to conceive of His personality, it is reasonable to think of it as higher and richer than ours, perfect where ours is imperfect. Surely also we have ground enough in our own existence to discern unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity. The higher the unity, the more easily and completely is the manifold taken up into itself, without impairing its oneness. The Christian revelation enables us thus to think of God. As Dorner phrases it: "This principle of union in the organism of the absolute Life we call the Holy Spirit. . . . The principle of union presupposes distinctions; but distinctions presuppose in turn the principle of union, for God could not part Himself unless He were sure of the principle of union. Thus Self-origination is possible by means of the mediation of the third: *trinitas dualitatem ad unitatem reducit.*"<sup>2</sup>

Absoluteness in the Infinite, rightly understood, does not mean that which is utterly out of relation with the finite, neither does it imply comprehension,

<sup>1</sup> Gerhart, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. I, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> *System of Christian Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 421.

or absorption of the finite; but a “fulness which is master and conscious of itself,” and which at the same time informs and sustains the creature in all its relations, both creaturely and Divine. In the case of man this relation has been impaired and broken. It is to be renewed in and through Christ, Son of God Incarnate, and that restoration is being carried out by the power of the Holy Spirit, partially now, but to be realized completely at the last, when all God’s purposes are accomplished.

The life of the spirit means, therefore, for man the process by which the human spirit, already possessed of certain capacities, attains gradually its growth and development in union with the Spirit of God. It is from the Christian point of view that this spirit-life is here regarded; and it may safely be said, with all the theological and theosophical speculations of the ages in view, that no higher, or more practically effective, teaching on this subject has been known in history. The “law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus” means the Christian way of attaining this high goal. It does “make free from the law of sin and death.” The redemption in Christ, ministered by the Holy Spirit and apprehended by receptive faith, raises man above himself as no other power has ever raised him. The process by which “Paracelsus attains” in Browning’s poem is nobly expressed, but it represents aspiration, rather than achievement.

“The secret of the world was mine.  
I knew, I felt (perception unexpressed,  
Uncomprehended by our narrow thought,  
But somehow felt and known in every shift  
And change in the spirit,—nay, in every pore  
Of the body, even)—what God is, what we are,  
What life is—how God tastes an infinite joy  
In infinite ways—one everlasting bliss,  
From whom all emanates, all power

Proceeds : in whom is life for evermore,  
 Yet whom existence in its lowest form  
 Includes ; where dwells enjoyment, there is He.  
 . . . God renews

His ancient rapture. Thus He dwells in all  
 From life's minute beginnings, up at last  
 To man—the consummation of this scheme  
 Of being, the completion of this sphere  
 Of life. . . .

For these things tend still upward, progress is  
 The law of life, man is not Man as yet."

Prognostics in creation told man's near approach :  
 so in man as he is there are august anticipations of  
 what he will be, "types of dim splendour in that  
 eternal circle life pursues." Not Divine Power alone,  
 Divine Love is needed—"love preceding power, and  
 with such power always more love." And yet all is  
 not told, the whole lesson of love is not yet learned.  
 He who has attained is still pressing forward.

"If I stoop  
 Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,  
 It is but for a time; I press God's lamp  
 Close to my breast; its splendour, soon or late,  
 Will pierce the gloom! I shall emerge one day."

These are man's highest hopes and strivings, indicating at least capacity and hope. The real secret of the upward rise is contained in the words, Your life is hid with Christ in God. The power by which the glorious summit is to be attained is expressed in another well-known phrase of St. Paul—"strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inward man." Some steps in the climb up this world's great altar-stairs to the very presence and glory of God, sustained and animated by His indwelling Spirit, are now to be traced in the light of Christian revelation.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

*“The Father shall give you another Comforter. . . . He shall glorify me.”*—JOHN xiv. 16; xvi. 14.

*“We call the new life which came into the world—the burning love, the unstinted self-devotion, the infinite compassion, the sweet and beautiful innocence, the high ambition to spend and be spent for God—we call all this the fruits of Christianity. In more exact words, all has flowed from the great gift of Pentecost.”*—R. W. CHURCH.

*“The belief in the Holy Spirit as a Divine Person living, acting, quickening, elevating, sanctifying—is the key to the solution of many spiritual problems, or at least to the temper in which alone it is possible to think of solving them.”*—J. E. C. WELLDON.

*“All Christians profess to believe in the Holy Ghost. Had only all Christians so believed, and lived up to their belief, they would all have been mystics, and there would have been no mysticism.”*—R. C. MOBERLY.

## II

### THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is frequently said that the history of mankind includes three dispensations, or periods of Divine self-manifestation. First is that of the Father, from the Creation to the Incarnation; the second is that of the Son, during the life of Christ upon the earth; while the third is that of the Holy Spirit, extending from Pentecost till now and to the end of the world.

Truth is, no doubt, implied in such a statement, but it is not accurate, and may easily be misleading. There is but one Triune God, continually operative in the history of humanity, who controls and orders all generations, age linked with age, and preparing for ages yet to come. In this long history occurred the great epoch of the Incarnation, during which the Son perfectly revealed the Father-God to man in human form and fashion. Since Christ left the earth, the Spirit whom He promised has been carrying on the work for the consummation of His Kingdom, and during these two thousand years of Christian history it is the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ, who has been the one operative agent in the Church and in the world to bring fallen men into fellowship with the Father through the Son of His love.

But, if that is true, the Church has largely failed to realize the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit. We hear and read far more of the Fatherhood of God

and of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ our Lord, than of the operations of the Spirit. Not that this is necessarily ground of complaint. God is One. Father, Son and Spirit are distinctions within the unity of the one only and true God. To glorify the Son is to glorify the Father; and that men may do either rightly, the Holy Spirit must glorify the Son, as Christ said He should do. But if the full chord of Christian music is to be rightly struck, due emphasis must be given to each note. When the work of the Holy Spirit is insufficiently considered, the missing note is the immediate Presence and Indwelling and Inworking of God in—(1) Creation; (2) Humanity; (3) the Church; (4) the mediatorial Kingdom of Christ and the world at large.

The reasons for such comparative neglect are tolerably obvious. That which is spiritual is vague and indefinite, while the actual life of Christ on the earth, the words He spoke and the work He did, are concrete and historical. Again, the work of the Holy Spirit in human hearts lies on the border-line between the Divine and human, and it is only natural to emphasize the human side, the activities and manifestations of human life, rather than the Divine energy which prompts and animates the whole. Again, while lack of spiritual experience is a drawback in the study of any department of theology, it is absolutely fatal here. Critics may discuss Christology from the point of view of history or of literature; but, when they come to deal with the work of the Holy Spirit, without spiritual knowledge they are so far at a loss that they give up the attempt with a sneer at its futility. Whilst, on the other hand, those who possess spiritual knowledge through their own experience do not find it easy to convey such knowledge in words. For who

among men knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of the man which is in him? And the deeper things which the Spirit of God teaches are so dimly apprehended that when they are expressed they are often condemned as mystical and unreal.

The more reason, therefore, that from time to time attempts should be made to redress the balance. The Society of Friends in the seventeenth century, the Methodists in the eighteenth, drew attention—it may be with somewhat disproportionate emphasis—to truths which the generations were in danger of forgetting. There are indications that the twentieth century has in this matter its own message to give and its own lessons to learn. But if we would learn them aright we must turn to the fountain-head. The literature of the New Testament is, for evangelical churches at least, normal and normative on this, as on all other topics of Christian doctrine. If the infallibility and inerrancy of the Scripture writers on all subjects of human knowledge are not now insisted on, if the documents are now studied with freedom as well as with reverence, these sacred books are felt to be the more, not the less, full of inspiration and authority for the Christian. Guidance is here furnished for those who trust not the letter which killeth, but the Spirit who makes alive. A record of facts, an enunciation of fundamental principles, are there to be found, which are of permanent import; and the question has to be asked, How was the work of the Holy Spirit understood and realized in the earliest days? What modifications, if any, has the passage of time effected? How far is the Church following on the lines laid down in the New Testament? How far may the modern Church expect to reach, or to surpass, the measure of the gift therein described? What is

the significance of the work of the Spirit in successive ages of the Church, and how is it to be understood for the needs of to-day? These are large questions. A wise man will think himself happy if he is able here and there to suggest a fraction of an answer to them. The work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament has furnished material for more than one ample volume; all that can be given in a few pages is some illustration of the way in which the New Testament may be studied so as to solve some of these perpetually recurring problems.

## I

The working of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament cannot be ignored, and it explains much that would otherwise be unintelligible in the manifestations of the New. St. Peter's address on the day of Pentecost points back to the prophet Joel, and the strange upliftings of that memorable day were not wholly new or alien to Jewish thought. From the first chapter of Genesis to the last page of the prophetic volume, the Spirit is never forgotten. He appears first, last and midst, often in unlikely places, and with increasing significance as time goes on. Not, indeed, as "The Third Person in the Trinity," nor as distinguished from other "Persons" in the Godhead. The Spirit of God is God Himself at work in the world. The "breath" of God indicates the life of God in active operation—quickening, moving, energizing; so that as God is said to have eyes to see, ears to hear, an arm to work, so also He sends forth His Spirit, Himself the living God and the great quickener of life everywhere.

In nature, He broods over chaos dark and rude, to

bring out order and peace. The origin of life in man is that Divine breath which God breathed into his nostrils, and it is when He sends forth His Spirit that the face of the earth is renewed. In art, Bezaleel and Aholiab devise cunning works in gold and silver, in brass and embroidery, because they are filled with the Spirit of God. In government, His presence is needed. It is the greatest of human tasks to rule well; and if in the midst of anarchy the Judges introduced order, it was because they were inspired of God to do so; and Solomon was endued with the Spirit to perceive and do the right as God's vice-regent in the land. The inspiration of the prophets is of various types. The Spirit of God came upon Elijah to dare and act, upon Ezekiel to write, and upon Daniel to dream, as it came upon Isaiah the son of Amos to fill a great place as statesman, and his later namesake to anticipate the ages and preach a gospel of comfort to the exiled and disconsolate people. All moral and religious life was under the special direction of the Spirit of God. His Spirit gives man understanding, and the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching the inmost parts of his being. In the latest utterances of all, that name is occasionally used which in later days was to become so sacredly familiar, and a tenderer tone breathes through the words, "They turned and grieved His Holy Spirit," and "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." The prophets drew largely on this source in the outline of their promises for the future, they had their message concerning the Anointed One yet to appear, but no gracious forecasts were richer than these—"I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thine offspring"; "Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams, the servants even and the handmaidens shall

prophesy, for I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."

Without this preparation under the Old Covenant the richer grace of the New could hardly have been conferred. Only a people trained like Israel could have received and appreciated the revelation that was granted in the latter days. This training had deeply impressed on their minds the close relation of God to His people, the Divine influence never far from them, the tenderness which did not utterly forsake them even when unfaithful, the intimate communion ever possible, save when shut out from God by the barrier of sin. Israel, before the coming of Christ, had travelled a considerable way towards learning what was uttered later in sublime words for all time—"God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

## II

Turn to the New Testament, and the doctrine is the same, yet how changed! Mark the increasing frequency of the mention of the Spirit; He appears now on every page. Mark further, that, while there is no mention of the word Trinity, the relation of the Spirit to the Father and the Son indicates a fuller revelation of the being and nature of God. The Spirit is not only the Spirit of God, He is the Spirit of Jesus, of Christ, of God's Son. And the change of emphasis implies virtually a new doctrine. It is no exaggeration to say that in the New Testament the Holy Spirit is everywhere, in all things. Dr. W. L. Walker, who has made this subject his own, says, "The Spirit is the great thing in Christianity"; "The essential thing in the Christian religion"; this is "the dis-

tinctive doctrine, vital, fundamental and permanent.”<sup>1</sup> Speaking of St. Paul and Paulinism, Dr. Moffatt says, “The most vital and central doctrine is that of the Spirit, in relation to the person of Christ and to the Christian experience.” This is not to disparage doctrines concerning the Father and the Son, for these are the very truths which the Holy Spirit takes up and works out; it is the power and grace of both that He applies and brings home to the hearts of men. The Son appears in His own glory just in proportion as He reveals and glorifies the Father; so the Holy Spirit does not speak from Himself, but “He shall glorify *Me*. All things that the Father hath are Mine, therefore said I that He shall take of Mine and shall show them unto you.” I am leaving you, said the Saviour, yet only going away so that I shall be nearer to you than ever; for He is coming whom the Father will send in My name. So He spoke, and so it was done. All the latter part of the New Testament is a commentary on these words. Christ’s promise was fulfilled, and these books, written between A.D. 50-100 teem with influences of the Holy Spirit, which breathe forth from the pages to-day, as they have done any day for these two thousand years.

The operations of the Spirit during the life of Christ on the earth are described in detail, especially by St. Luke, from the birth and infancy and growth of Jesus, His baptism and temptation, down to His Cross, where He offered His all-availing sacrifice “through the eternal Spirit” and His resurrection, when He was declared to be the Son of God with power “according to the Spirit of holiness.” The latter two passages are instructive, though the primary reference in them is probably not to the Holy Spirit directly. It is

<sup>1</sup> *The Spirit and the Incarnation*, *passim*.

generally recognized that during the life of Christ on earth the Spirit "was not yet," and that a great epoch was made and marked on the day of Pentecost, when the Church of Christ was born. What happened on that great and notable day, and what changes came about to justify the previous expectation and the subsequent apostolic ministry?

In the narrative of Acts ii symbolism unquestionably has a large place. On this subject Dr. Sanday says, "A broad recognition of the extent of symbolism is necessary in any process of adjusting our modern ways of looking at things with the ancient ways"; he speaks further of "a system of equivalence," so that the critical method at one stage shall correspond to the exegetical at another, the paraphrastic at a third, and the symbolical at a fourth. "But the change is only in the mode of presentation; the essence of that which is presented is unchanged. We need to remind ourselves from time to time that the way in which a thing appears to us does not affect the underlying reality."<sup>1</sup> In studying the events of the Day of Pentecost it is not altogether easy for us to translate the account into modern language and answer the question, What happened then? so as to produce the same impression on the modern mind that the second chapter of Acts produced on those for whom it was written. St. Luke says that tongues *ώστει πυρός*, like as of fire, *ἄφθησαν* appeared (as in a vision). Wind and Fire were already fully recognized in the Old Testament as symbols of the presence of God, and the prophecy of John the Baptist in Matt. iii. 11 goes to show that the baptism of the Holy Ghost would be a baptism of fire. Lambent jets of flame appeared to flicker in the air, and distribution of the gift to each

<sup>1</sup> *Christologies Ancient and Modern*, pp. 221, 227.

is made emphatic. On the nature of the "gift" of tongues something further will be said in Chapter IV.

Whatever the nature of the accompanying phenomena, the important fact is that "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." The Divine power which rested on the Apostles wrought a veritable revolution —how? If we compare the disciples as they were a few weeks before, during the time of Christ's ministry, the change is hardly credible. Even at the time of the Ascension their naïve question, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom unto Israel?" shows how far they were from understanding the person and work of their Master. The great change wrought at Pentecost is not explicable by any ordinary experiences, yet there is nothing in it contrary to the teaching of a sound psychology. What happened is in harmony with principles now generally recognized, though they are illustrated in an unparalleled and supernatural degree. The full results were discernible later, though even at the moment, as Peter's sermon shows, a notable change had taken place. The address—which is not to be read as if it were a shorthand report—exhibits an early stage of apostolic training and preaching. The following features, among others, are very marked.

(1) An illumination of mind to understand much concerning the Person and work of Christ that hitherto had been dark and unintelligible. It included a clear perception of the Messiahship of Jesus, an acceptance of His death, not as an overthrow, but as ordered by Divine Providence for a great end, the view of His resurrection being specially illuminative. Now, adds St. Peter, after the appointed period of waiting and prayer, "He hath poured forth this which ye now see and hear." "This"—which the Apostles themselves

did not fully understand, but which made them to be beside themselves with rapture, and the dawning perception of inconceivable spiritual glory yet to come.

(2) The power to express themselves, or rather, to proclaim the new truth as a message. *Ιαρρησία* indicates subjectively confidence, objectively courage. The Apostles displayed both; they proved that at least sufficient assimilation of truth had taken place to enable them to utter it freely, bravely and powerfully.

(3) The power to impress others implied a still fuller endowment. The impression produced was doubtless due to other characteristics besides speech. Even in speech it is what a man is, not what he says, that speaks loudest; and unconsciously to themselves the Holy Spirit had so changed these men that they could speak with a "demonstration" which only He could effect. He who spoke in them was working also in the hearts of their hearers, hence the wonderful immediate impression produced.

(4) All points to Christ. He is the one theme of the first Christian sermon, Peter has nothing else to declare. It is not the Spirit of God, generally and abstractly, that speaks, though the prophecy of Joel was fulfilled and the Divine character of the *afflatus* is taken for granted. It is God-in-Christ who is proclaimed and glorified. As in the solar spectrum the dark lines prove the presence in the sun's atmosphere of incandescent sodium or magnesium, carbon or hydrogen, so the messenger of God testifies not only to Divine truth in general, but to some special message burned in by experience upon his soul. There is no question what the special Divine truth was which shone through all Apostolic preaching; it was not they, but the very Spirit of Christ that spoke in them.

(5) Others are to receive this Divine gift in their

turn. The remission of sins was the first blessing bestowed upon those who believed; they must take on them the name of Christ, enter the circle of His disciples by baptism, be acknowledged as His, and afterwards they should receive the Holy Spirit. This was, however, only the beginning of what was to be enjoyed; one main characteristic of the "outpouring" being that all shared in it, young and old, high and low, educated and uneducated, leaders and followers, each in his measure, according to the power of each to receive and the work given to each to do.

Whether three thousand persons were actually baptized and enrolled in one day, or not, is a small matter. *Acts ii. 42* is not a statistical return of Church membership made upon the evening of the day of Pentecost. The writer records that, as a result of that first address, not hundreds but thousands were convicted, converted and on the high road to salvation. The significance of the day lies not in the exact phenomena recorded in half-a-dozen lines which we can only approximately interpret, but in the splendid fulfilment of the promise of the Master, that when His physical presence was removed, not only should His spiritual presence remain, but much more than this. Work was to be done such as He Himself could not accomplish in His lifetime. A closer relationship to Him began, deeper, more intelligent, more abiding, than anything they had known before. And the most remarkable feature of all was the quickening influence which unconsciously went forth from them, streaming through them as through a divinely appointed channel. For the promise, "He that believeth on Me, from his inmost being shall flow rivers of living water" could not be fulfilled till Jesus was glorified and the Spirit outpoured.

Enough that a new epoch had dawned, continuous with the old, yet rising distinctly above it, and indicative of a higher and more glorious one still to come. So with the water in the lock upon the river; the lock fills slowly, drop by drop, trickling stream by trickling stream, the boat rises gradually upward and upward, till, when the crucial moment is reached, the floodgates open of their own accord, the water rushes through, and a higher level is attained for the vessel, never to be lost again. Preparation was made before the day of Pentecost, long subsequent processes followed, but the hour in which the new level of life was reached was momentous. Or one may think of the launching of a great ocean liner. The vessel is in dry dock, there is a ponderous apparatus of struts and stays until the time of launching arrives. Then the cradle and sliding ways are put in place, and at the right moment the locking arrangement is sharply removed, and the great vessel slides down to the water. But what no hydraulic machinery could do is accomplished with golden ease as the tide rises and bears the great keel out into the river and the ocean, ready to sail round the world, laden with argosies for the very ends of the earth. Pentecost marked a tidal movement, the end of which has as yet hardly dawned upon human vision.

A new type of life begins from henceforth, the outward conditions and circumstances remaining the same. It was new because it was animated from within by a new indwelling energy, the Spirit of Christ. The most prosaic records of history are enough to prove this. Let any man underline in the Acts of the Apostles all the references to the Holy Spirit and watch the result; or let him strike out from St. Paul's Epistles all that speaks of, and points to,

the Spirit, and see how much is left. The religion of the New Testament is a religion of the Holy Spirit, and the Christianity of subsequent times that would realize the New Testament type under new conditions must also be a religion of the Spirit. Most of the declensions which have marked the religious life of Christendom have been due to forgetfulness of this fundamental fact, and all striking revivals of Christian life and power have sprung from its recollection and reinforcement.

### III

It is hardly needful to show that the Holy Spirit is spoken of in the New Testament clearly and emphatically as Personal. This was shown by several of the Fathers, notably by Basil in the fourth century, and his line of exposition is valid to-day. The "Spirit" in the Old Testament is personal because it represents God in action, and the God of the Old Testament is described as personal, even to the verge of anthropomorphism. But in the New Testament the personal action ascribed to the Holy Spirit in distinction from the Father and the Son is so marked as to form a new and impressive feature. This fact does not necessitate now an inquiry into the eternal personality of the Spirit in the Godhead, or into the doctrine of the Trinity, often misrepresented by non-Christians, and often misunderstood by Christians themselves. But when rightly expounded it makes the specific New Testament doctrine of the personal work of the Holy Spirit intelligible and appropriate, as otherwise it could hardly be. But this aspect of doctrine may now be left on one side.

The most explicit teaching on the subject is found in Christ's discourses concerning the Paraclete in

John xiv.-xvi. If these stood alone they might be represented as a comparatively late reflection of earlier doctrine peculiar to St. John. But St. Paul's Epistles are among the earliest New Testament documents, and Rom. viii. is equally emphatic on the personal characteristics—thought, feeling and action—ascribed to the Holy Spirit throughout. What we find in that well-known chapter is not grammatical personification, not subjective hypostatizing, but it implies a way of regarding God's working within us as personal, just as is the Father's care over us and the Saviour's work for our salvation. The name *Παράκλητος*, Paraclete, is personal; as *Κατήγορος* the Accuser of man is personal, so is the Spirit as our Helper and Defender. He is present as champion and advocate, One who strengthens rather than consoles, though all kinds of spiritual succour and invigoration are ascribed to Him. He is another than the Father and the Son. A self cannot pray the self to send another self from himself, as Christ prays the Father to send the other Comforter in John xiv. 26. It is the Spirit who in xiv. 20 makes the disciples to know that the Son is in the Father, and that believers are in Christ and Christ in them. His it is to bring to remembrance the words of Christ, to teach them anew, with an understanding of their meaning never enjoyed before. Jesus is the Way, the Spirit is the Way-Guide, who will lead them into all the truth, as only a living Divine Lord can guide the children of men personally through the ages. And the promise concerning Him is that He will not only be *μετά*, in company with them, *παρά* by their side, but *ἐν*, abiding evermore in the inmost hearts of all true disciples.

In St. Paul's Epistles, though the same words are seldom used, the same idea is presented. The leading

of the Spirit in Rom. viii. 13 carries us beyond the guide who points out the way. The intercession in viii. 26 brings vividly before us the Divine Advocate within, the personal communion implied in the inward witness of viii. 15 is very close. Joining this verse with Gal. iv. 6, we find now that it is the child of God who cries Abba, Father; now, the Spirit in him. Grieve not the Holy Spirit, urges the Apostle, for He can be grieved; quench not this Divine fire, for coldness and carelessness may cause Him not only to mourn, but to depart. His is the power to strengthen in the inward man, and when He is so inwardly present, Christ dwells in the heart by faith (Eph. iii. 16, 17). The Holy Spirit is the earnest of redemption, heaven begun below; and when this state is realized Christ is in you, the hope of glory. Thus does St. Paul from his own characteristic point of view corroborate the teaching of St. John; and whilst emphasizing a personal Father-God, and a personal Saviour and a personal Holy Spirit, he shows, without seeming to show, that the Three are One.

It may be said that there is danger here of anthropomorphism, that all that is intended is a strong "hypostatizing" of the Spirit. Danger of this kind there is in all our language concerning God, but we must not therefore be silent. The personal language of the Bible brings us nearer to reality, nearer to the living God, than the abstract language of the philosopher. The danger in our time, especially among the educated, lies in the opposite direction. To explain evil as an abstraction is to explain it away. So it is easier to think of Christ as a man than as God Incarnate, easier to think of the Holy Spirit as an influence than as a personal indwelling presence.

But simply for lack of this personal realization many nominal Christians are living without God in the world. The Father is afar, none has seen or can see Him; the Son lived on the earth long ago, but the records are scanty, uncertain, perhaps mistaken; while if unbelievers ask, Where is now thy God? there is no living, present, operating Deity, whose personal existence and power they realize, even more fully than their own. "I was made to rest," says Newman, "in the thought of two, and two only, supreme and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator"; but what men need to know in personal experience is not so much the existence of God afar off as Creator and Ruler, but God here and now as an indwelling Spirit.

It is not the denial of this doctrine among Christians that is serious, but the ignoring it. Such a habit is in harmony with other tendencies of the time. If the personality of man be loosely held, all hold of a personal God is loosened also. And in proportion as the mind and feelings are made dependent on the body, as psychology is resolved into a department of physiology, so that thoughts and emotions are functions of the material organism—the brain, the nervous system and other organs—we cannot wonder if the very meaning of personal life dissolves and disappears. Whatever be thought of some forms of Idealism as philosophy adequate to the facts of life, undoubtedly the assertion of the main principle of Idealism during the last three or four decades has been of essential service to religious thought in this country.

For of the soul the body form doth take,  
For soul is form, and doth the body make.

Is soul "form," impress, stamp, or a mere transient, ephemeral product of antecedent forces? The ques-

tion is a fundamental one, and bound up with the answer to it is our hold on the personality of man and our belief in a personal God as something more than the shadow of a dream. Current tendencies are only too strong which go to undervalue the importance of individual personal life, to loosen the root-fact that it is the man himself, he who thinks and feels, loves and hopes, grieves and rejoices, who is all-important. The fact is, that nothing else matters. What is a man profited—the question has surely not become superfluous—if he gain the whole world and lose *himself*? Spirit alone abides, though it needs a tenacious faith in the unseen to realize it.

So God is personal Spirit, and as personal Spirit not only has He brought personal spirits into being, but He establishes union and communion with those who trust and obey Him, by that personal Spirit who abides within them if they will make room for Him. Belief in a personal God preserves the dignity of man, his moral freedom and responsibility and his personal immortality. “God is Soul, souls I and thou, souls should with souls have place.” Belief in a personal indwelling Spirit is the very nerve of experimental religion. So it was in primitive Christianity. Its power lay not in creed, not in ritual, nor even in conduct, but in a certain new Spirit of life which resulted from a new sense of the Divine Spirit within man and a realization of this affecting the whole life. If the power of primitive Christianity is to be renewed it must be along these lines. The real presence of Christ among His people is not in the consecrated wafer, nor in the hands of communicants, though sacred beyond words is the Table of the Lord and His presence there. But the living Christ can only be present in the power of the Holy Spirit, whose

very name is hardly mentioned in some sacramental offices from end to end. The soul athirst for the living God finds in all ages that "the kingdom of God is within you."

#### IV

Another feature of New Testament teaching is that the Holy Spirit takes the initiative with man, operates in all men, has a function in the world as well as in the Church. Still it is true in history, as at the first creation, "in the beginning—God." He comes first as Creator, as Preserver—though in the preservation of life we co-operate with Him—and as Redeemer He comes first, not we. We love, because He first loved us. As renewing Power, also, He is primary; men are to work out their own salvation because God works in them to will and to work. The technical theological term "prevenient grace" may be seldom used, but that for which it stands remains, or the world would fall to pieces. It means that the God in whom Christians believe is in all that is good always and everywhere the Origin. His operations are not to be enclosed within the bounds of eternal decrees on the one hand, or appointed sacraments on the other—He is a God of free spontaneous goodness, of undeserved and unbounded grace. God in and through the Spirit ever moves within, as well as over and around, every man; and all good in man's heart is the result of the brooding of that Spirit over its dark and troubled waters. The ocean of grace is continually laving and cleansing all the coasts of our sordid and unworthy nature; grace is the very atmosphere in and by which alone men can live and act. "Every human heart is human," but what makes

it human in the best sense is Divine. Desires, capacities, energies such as belong to men are open from the very first, and always, to the working and sway of the Spirit of God, who made men for Himself and therefore makes men restless till they find rest in Him. Scripture, conscience, experience, history, combine to prove the truth of this. "To draw, redeem and seal is Thine." Man is never without the leadings and strivings of the Spirit, though so often he disregards and not seldom stubbornly resists them. No interpreter has the key to the New Testament doctrine of the Spirit who neglects to take account of this vital truth.

Hence what is called conviction of sin is part of the office of the Spirit in the world. Whence comes it that men should ever be brought to pronounce themselves and their whole life wrong, to sit in judgment upon themselves, prompted by a standard utterly and entirely above themselves? It is easy to account for some kinds of self-condemnation as the reflection of the judgment of the State, of society, or of man's better self, but such self-denunciation as amounts to conviction of sin implies a perverted relation to God of the whole nature and the whole life, as well as an utter inability to set it right by self-reformation. God in Christ represents the highest standard of life man has yet known, and the Spirit of Christ it is who brings this home to the heart as the true life of which he has come so miserably short. Man cannot raise this sense of guilt in his own heart, nor remedy it by his own effort; he might as well try to rise without assistance in the air superior to the power of gravitation. A power from above is necessary, and in Christianity it has a special character, set forth in well-known words.

In John xvi. 8-11 the word *ἐλέγχειν* has been differently translated by "convince" and "convict," the two words indicating a difference of method, rather than of nature, in the Spirit's work. To convince has reference to truth, to convict concerns character and condition; *ἐλέγχειν* would mean, therefore, either to bring home truths otherwise doubted or discarded, or to bring home charges made against the conduct of life. The Holy Spirit does both, though the latter meaning is intended here. But it is based on the Spirit's work of convincing men of spiritual truth, as described in John xiv. 26. Men do not know what sin, righteousness and judgment really mean; and as Westcott says in his note on the place, "the idea of conviction is complex. It involves the conceptions of authoritative examination, of unquestionable proof, of decisive judgment, of primitive power." None but the Holy Spirit can make this plain to the man himself and be a witness to him from within. The message may, and must, come from without; the Spirit's work is done within the walls, within the very citadel of man's own nature, causing him, however reluctantly, to acquiesce, to take up the new truth, acknowledge, assimilate and make it his own. The philosophy of a Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, may do this after a fashion; the searching parable of a prophet, Nathan, with its application "Thou art the man," may find an echo in the conscience of a David; but sin implies error in personal relation to God, and conviction of sin in the Christian sense can only be wrought by the Spirit of Christ.

Christ Himself is the supreme test of character. What think ye of Him as the supreme revelation of the Divine? is the question which searches men most deeply and sifts them most thoroughly. In this light

sin is seen to be not merely a breach of commandment, but a grieving of love, an offence against the highest power of goodness within human ken. "Because they believe not on Me"—if a man cannot, or will not, acknowledge the Divineness of Christ and so see his own deficiency, failure and sin, that he cries out, What must I do to be saved? he has not definitely entered upon the upward way. But only the Holy Spirit can accomplish this work, though it is in connection with "the Word," the message of Christ's Gospel, that He does it. And the primitive power of Gospel preaching is only to be realized by faithful recognition of this primitive truth—"He will convict the world in respect of sin because they believe not on Me."

Conviction in respect of righteousness is the complement of this. Does it mean the showing what Divine righteousness really is? or convincing men that this ruling principle of Divine government will win supremacy sooner or later? Or the making clear how true righteousness is to be attained among men, that it is supremely incumbent upon each to attain it, and that there is only one way in which it can be done? Probably all these are included in the pregnant phrase used. One feature of Christ's work is selected as the basis of this conviction, perhaps not one that His disciples would have chosen—because I go to the Father and ye behold Me no more. The connection of thought may be thus explained: (1) The example of righteousness in the life of Christ could only be rightly understood when He was taken away from the earth. (2) The power of righteousness could only be shown when His work was done, death and the resurrection preparing the way for His departure to the Father. (3) He who is no longer visible

on earth because He has gone to the Father thereby gives assurance, as from the right hand of God, that He has established and will consummate the kingdom of righteousness. The interpreter may choose among these meanings, or attempt to combine them together, but the message which brings home the fact of sin to men's hearts is of no use without the further message of righteousness. It is characteristic of the Gospel that both are proclaimed in one breath and a new meaning given to the watchword—the Lord is my righteousness.

These things take place within. But outside the circle of believers the world continues to run its own course. Other principles exist, will continue to exist, in human life, but they shall not ultimately rule. The world is judged, its true nature shown, its inferiority patent, its evil made plain, the verdict on it has been uttered and the sentence pronounced. Though it is not yet fully carried out, the process of execution has begun. The world has never been quite the same as it was before Christ came. When brought into the searching light He caused to shine, the shadows in the picture were deepened, as well as the lights heightened; one process is impossible without the other. It had been said, Thou shalt not murder: Christ said, Thou shalt not hate. It had been said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: Christ said, Thou shalt not lust. They of old time knew they ought to love their brethren: men of the new time were to learn to love their enemies. Never hitherto had the prince of this world been thus "judged"—known, marked and branded, for what he truly is. But to convict is to do much more than this. It is to bring home the truth to the world itself, however complete the condemnation implied. Only the Holy Spirit

can do this. It has been done to a great extent already, and if the Church had been more faithful in discharging its duty the work would have been by now effectively accomplished. But—it must be contritely confessed—many Christians have sadly marred this work of Christ, obliterated the outlines, dimmed the colours, blunted the sharp edge of truth, hampered and hindered the operations of the Spirit. His power abides, but it must be distinctly recognized if it is to be effective. The great Invisible Ally must be enlisted on the side of the feeble human forces, and the direction and control of the work be given to Him. As soon as the power in sermons becomes merely human, merely human work will be done by them. To convict the world in respect of sin, of righteousness and of judgment is absolutely necessary if the new heavens and the new earth are ever to become a great reality. Only the Divine Spirit can accomplish this superhuman task, and it is precisely here that so much modern preaching—which according to literary and critical standards is probably better than ever it was—ignominiously fails. He who would see Divine work accomplished must himself be the channel of the Divine Spirit.

## V

Nothing is more characteristic of Christianity than its teaching concerning the need for every man of an entirely new life, beginning with a new birth. For the most part it has been common amongst non-Christians to sneer at the very idea, after the fashion of Nicodemus, but of late, since Professor W. James and other philosophers have recognized the possibility and reality of such a change from the point of view

of psychology, some of these cavils have been silenced. The change, as is recognized in John iii., must be *ἀνωθεν*—whether the word means “from above,” or “anew,” or whether the doctrine of the “twice-born” be implicitly contained in it. “Flesh” is flesh, however improved or refined, and that which is born of it remains flesh. Take human nature only as a standard, make man the measure of all things, and only human results will be obtained. Those who refuse to recognize a higher power than nature cannot climb above the natural level. To realize a new life a man must indeed be born of the Spirit.

It is not always sufficiently recognized that this implies a new *personal* relation between man and God, brought about by the Personal Spirit inhabiting a newly fashioned nature. This fact supplies a real link between the old and the new life, and shows how a radical change is psychologically possible. The sneer at sudden conversions is from one point of view intelligible, and unfortunately the unreality and futility of many so-called conversions have brought natural, though undeserved, discredit on the doctrine. But personality has a power of its own. If close and intimate relations between human spirits are constituted, it is hardly possible to set limits to the renewing power of personal influence thus exerted. Many a sot has been raised out of the gutter and established in a new life, not by preaching, but by the uplifting power of a pure and strong and gracious personality. If ye, being evil—might not the words be fitly so applied?—are able thus to help one another, how much more shall the Holy Spirit of God work a great renewal? If there be a living God, if His Spirit can and will indeed inhabit the human heart, who shall assign limits to His working? The experience of

millions of Christians goes to show that moral miracles have been wrought generation after generation which can only be described by the words, "born again of the Spirit."

But the change is supernatural, not contra-natural. The study given to psychology during the last half century ought to be of great religious value. The more that can be discovered and understood of the normal workings of the human soul, the better. If further light can be cast upon the obscure realm of the sub-conscious, or subliminal consciousness, it ought to be of great service every way, in the education of children, in the shaping of character, and not least, in its bearing on religion. Meanwhile, however, caution is necessary, and they are not wise who are trying to solve obscure phenomena by others yet more obscure. Whilst some—amongst whom, strange to say, Dr. Sanday would appear to be counted—find in the sub-conscious realm the abode of the Divine, others regard this subterranean region as a world of more than half animal desires, surging and chaotic, which need to be tamed and yoked and harnessed by a directing will before they can form the material for a stable character. The phenomena of adolescence which have of late been closely studied shed some light upon an admittedly difficult subject.<sup>1</sup> The chief lesson which it seems necessary to inculcate at the moment is that those teachers are least to be trusted who confidently dogmatize concerning the limitations and possibilities of human nature. The more we learn of what man is and may become, the more does it become clear that regeneration, conversion—or whatever name be given to the renewal wrought by the Spirit of Christ in the nature of one who is born

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IX.

again—is not a magical and unnatural change, but the supernatural use, along the line of highest development, of material lying ready to hand for transformation.

This is not to say that a “scientific” explanation is to be found of the breathings of God’s heavenly wind, that a physical basis may be laid for every spiritual operation. But as our Lord’s miracles observed laws of their own and in no sense violated the order of nature, though they transcended all its known powers, so with the work of the Spirit, which while it uses human material, is in regeneration wholly Divine. The book called *Broken Earthenware* has only given point to lessons which were already written so that he might run who read them. Myriads of similar facts were well known, and conclusions had been drawn from them long before that book was written. But many will learn from fiction founded on fact what they are slow to believe when published in the reports of a Gospel mission.

A change in every man is needed at the very fount and spring of being. Christianity promises that it shall be effected, and claims that the promise has been abundantly fulfilled. He who is “in Christ” is a new creation, because the personal indwelling Spirit of God rules, directing and controlling his own spirit, so that a new life indeed begins. This is one reason why Wesley and the early Methodists insisted on what it would seem is the obsolescent doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit. This emphasizes the privilege and possibility of personal intercourse between the human spirit and the Divine at the very outset of the Christian life. The “testimony of our own spirit” is real and valuable, but it is to be distinguished from the direct witness of the Spirit of God, described in

Rom. viii. 16 and perhaps referred to in 1 John v. 7, 10; and the clearness with which this doctrine was taught in the Evangelical revival of the eighteenth century went far to make the religion of the time more vivid and practically effective. Other times, other modes of speech. But no change in modes of speech can alter spiritual realities. And if the power of New Testament religion is to be realized in these latter days, the conscious realization of the presence and favour of God through His indwelling Spirit must be renewed. Those will be the mightiest preachers in the future, as they have been in the past, who are able with greatest power to testify of this truth for themselves and bring others to a knowledge of it. Banned as enthusiastic, scoffed at as mystical, this experience lies at the very heart of evangelical religion. If one generation loses it, the next must rediscover it, if the Kingdom of Christ and the work of His Spirit is to be maintained in the earth.

Such is a brief outline of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, in some of its salient features. Others will appear later. Enough, however, has been said to show that in the records of the early Church lies a perpetually fresh source of inspiration for the Church of subsequent ages; not because the early Christians were wiser, or more experienced, or more numerous than their successors, but because they were "all filled with the Holy Spirit."



THE SPIRIT IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF  
ST. PAUL

*“We received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God.”*—I COR. ii. 12.

*“In seeking myself, I lost both me and Thee; In seeking Thee, I found both Thee and myself.”*—AUGUSTINE.

*“The true reality that is, and ought to be, is not matter and is still less Idea, but is the living Spirit of God and the world of personal spirits whom He has created. They only are the place in which Good and good things exist.”*—LOTZE.

*“Held our eyes no sunny sheen,  
How could sunlight e'er be seen?  
Dwelt no power Divine within us,  
How could God's Divineness win us?”*  
—GOETHE, *Xenien*.

*“All our life is a progress, through the world and through ourselves, to the God from whom we come, in whom we are and to whom we tend.”*—E. CAIRD.

### III

#### THE SPIRIT IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ST. PAUL

IN studying the New Testament teaching concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in the individual man, His methods and processes in the training of each soul for God, we naturally turn to St. Paul. He has made this subject his own. Other writers have touched upon it, he has developed it and led the theological thought of the Christian Church in reference to it for centuries. In the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark there are only passing references to the work of the Spirit, while St. Luke directly traces His operation in the life and ministry of our Lord from first to last. Only in St. John do we find a full account of Christ's utterances concerning the Paraclete, and these describe the work of the Comforter only in general terms. In the Acts it is the influence of the Spirit upon the community which engages the writer's attention; and had the New Testament ended with that book, the human spirit, longing for Divine guidance, would have been largely left to grope out its own way. St. Paul, whilst he shows himself quite familiar with the special phenomena described as the "workings" of the Spirit in the Churches—an examination of which will be undertaken in the next chapter—nevertheless realized the pre-eminent importance of the ethical side of His work in the personal life of the individual. In such great, vital chapters as Rom. viii., Gal. iv. and v.,

and 1 Cor. ii. he has laid down lines of thought which have helped to change the spiritual history of the world.

In order rightly to interpret St. Paul's teaching, it appears desirable to examine somewhat carefully the words which he employs to describe the characteristics of spiritual life. What were St. Paul's views of the constitution of human nature apart from the Spirit of God, and of the way in which the indwelling of the Spirit affects the living man?

## I

And first, what may we expect to find on such a subject in St. Paul's Epistles, whence did he draw his doctrine, and how far has he any special psychology of his own?

It must be remembered that St. Paul has left no systematic treatise of any kind, nor were his Epistles formal compositions, technically claiming a place in "literature." Deissmann may have gone somewhat too far when he says that the result of an examination of them "can be nothing more than a sketch of the character of Paul the letter-writer, and not the system of Paul the epistolographer; what speaks to us in the letters is his faith, not his dogmatics."<sup>1</sup> But in the main this point of view is the right one. It is generally accepted now that the language of the New Testament, the *κοινὴ* of the Levant, was not, properly speaking, the language of literature, but of common speech. St. Paul, in dictating to his amanuensis glowing words of exhortation to the Churches, is not to be interpreted as if he were an arm-chair philo-

<sup>1</sup> *Bible Studies* (Eng. Trans.), p. 58.

sopher finely choosing his diction, accurately distinguishing synonyms and building up a complete scheme of psychology. But neither, on the other hand, does he write carelessly or confusedly. The spoken Greek of his day was susceptible of fine literary use; St. Paul himself had a highly trained mind and a power of weighty expression. The great topics of religion on which he wrote had been familiar to him from childhood; he was himself one of the noblest early products of the new religious energy which had begun to transform the world; he was, as all his letters prove, specially guided by the Spirit of God and of Christ to put into words the new thoughts and feelings which, like new wine, were mightily fermenting in the new communities called Christian; and in him we find a new powerful embodiment of them which must not be lightly treated as merely casual utterances. The fact that they are not the systematic product of late after-reflection should be no drawback to their influence, but rather greatly enhance it.

From what sources, then, did St. Paul draw in the words which he uses to express the working of the Spirit of God in man? (1) The Old Testament, in the original Hebrew and notably in the Greek version. Brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a Hebrew of Hebrews, he knew the Scriptures from a child, and shows in many ways the influence of careful Jewish, sometimes Rabbinical, training. His quotations from law and prophets, still more the allusions, direct and indirect, to their contents, show that his mind was saturated with Old Testament knowledge, that he thought very largely in terms of the Old Covenant. (2) At the same time, St. Paul had enjoyed the benefit of some of the best culture of his day. He was

familiar with the Hellenism of Alexandria, which had permeated the world of "the Dispersion," he had been brought up in the capital of a Roman province, was more or less familiar with Roman law—itself a liberal education—his sensitive and susceptible mind was quite capable of assimilating ideas which were "in the air" rather than definitely formulated, and his intense Judaism had been to some extent, though probably not deeply, influenced by the current literature of his time. (3) Above all, he had passed through a deep, searching, transforming spiritual experience. He was a "fusile Apostle," melted to take a new mould as by a flash of lightning. In him old material was metamorphosed by new thoughts and aims acquired from a new point of view by a finely tempered human spirit touched to fine issues.

May we expect, then, to find in St. Paul's Epistles a true Biblical psychology? The answer depends on what is understood by the phrase. We shall not find, on the one hand, the precision of a systematic treatise, nor, on the other, the confused talk of the man in the street. We shall find the product of a trained mind, an eager spirit, a great teacher, using material such as has just been described in order to express the characteristics of a new spiritual life, intensely realized in his own personal history and rapidly becoming reproduced in thousands of other lives. These were being newly shaped by a new spiritual power, the very nature of which was as yet but partially understood.

Coming, then, to our immediate subject, we find St. Paul using the word *πνεῦμα* (Spirit) in the following senses—

1. The Spirit of God, as in the Old Testament.

2. The Spirit of Christ, as specially sent by Christ and revealing Him.
3. This Spirit at work in the Churches as communities, manifested by certain notable phenomena.
4. The same Spirit in His normal work upon the human spirit, producing subjective changes, transforming the character and conduct of the individual Christian.

The last is the subject of present inquiry, the theme to which St. Paul, if we may judge from his writings, gave the larger proportion of his thoughts and which he esteemed most important. In order to understand his language and the exact bearing of his phraseology concerning the action of the Divine Spirit upon the human, it will be necessary to sketch in as background some account of what may be called his psychology, his use of such terms as flesh, mind, heart, body, soul and spirit.

## II

In the Old Testament three words are used to describe the soul-life of man : *nephesh*, *neshamah* and *ruach*, the first corresponding to soul, the third to spirit, whilst the second occupies a kind of middle position. The first is the most frequent, occurring more than 750 times in different senses ; the second is quite subordinate, being found but some 25 times in all ; whilst the third word, *ruach*, or spirit, occurs more than 370 times, if its use to denote the natural mind and supernatural influences, as well as the human spirit, be included.<sup>1</sup> It would be a mistake to expect

<sup>1</sup> See Prof. H. W. Robinson's paper in *Mansfield College Essays*, pp. 267-286, entitled, "Hebrew Psychology in relation to Pauline Anthropology."

in Hebrew writings of some centuries before Christ the preservation of exact distinction of synonyms such as obtained in Greek long afterwards. But a distinction between *nephesh* (soul) and *ruach* (spirit) is found and may be considered fairly established in a number of cases. According to Dr. Laidlaw, one of the best modern authorities, "*nephesh* is the subject or bearer of life, *ruach* is the principle of life," or "life constituted in the creature as distinguished from life bestowed by the Creator." Or, again, "the usage is practically uniform which puts 'spirit' for the animating principle, and 'soul,' or 'living soul,' for the animated result."<sup>1</sup> The usage which made "soul" to mean the entire human being as a constituted life, and "spirit" to mean the life-principle as belonging to God and bestowed by Him on man, undoubtedly influenced the New Testament writers generally and St. Paul in particular. When, however, soul or spirit on the one hand was opposed to body or the flesh on the other—the immaterial as opposed to the material side—the distinction between the two tends to disappear, and they are used almost interchangeably.

The term "flesh" occurs in the Old Testament more than 260 times, to denote the corporeal element in human nature, in various shades of meaning. Sometimes the material substance is emphasized, sometimes its frail and perishable character, sometimes the sensuous, rather than the sensual, element in humanity, as opposed to the Divine nature in its abiding spiritual essence. But the idea of flesh as essentially evil does not belong to the Old Testament at all, nor is the darker use of the word, with its deepening tinge of moral evil, characteristic of Old

<sup>1</sup> *Bible Doctrine of Man*, p. 88.

Testament usage. "Body" is not so frequently found, but the pairs of words, "body and soul," "flesh and spirit," are employed to point the contrast between the material and the immaterial parts of man. Whether these two phrases can be distinguished is not so clear. Dr. Laidlaw says, "'Soul and body' links the individual with the organism; 'flesh and spirit' links the earthly substance in which life inheres with the divine spark or principle of life."<sup>1</sup>

"Heart" is a characteristic Old Testament word, the 850 instances in which the word is employed psychologically not including many in which the bodily organ is literally intended. But it is used, by a natural metaphor, to describe the central power of man's immaterial nature. As the blood which is the life issues from and returns to the physical heart, so the heart indicates the centre of man's personality as a whole. Sometimes the emotions are intended—hope or fear, sorrow or joy; sometimes the intellectual powers, as in 1 Kings iii. 9, and in many passages where technical skill is implied. But especially is the will referred to as the very citadel of the soul of man, and it is out of the heart, in this sense, that there come forth all the issues of man's life.

"Mind" is not a characteristic Hebrew word; it might even be said hardly to exist in the language as an abstract term. *Noûs* occurs occasionally in the LXX, but it stands either for "heart" or "spirit." On the other hand, the products of mind, as represented by thoughts and reflections, are often spoken of; *binah* ("understanding") includes the power of moral rather than of intellectual perception, the two being, indeed, constantly blended in Hebrew.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 112.

Gathering up results, Dr. Hatch<sup>1</sup> says that in the LXX *καρδία*, *πνεῦμα* and *ψυχή* are largely interchangeable as translations of the same Hebrew words, and that the lines of distinction between them are not sharply drawn, but that *καρδία* (heart) "is most commonly used of will and intention, *ψυχή* of appetite and desire." It is, on the whole, more satisfactory, following Beck—whose conclusion is styled by Laidlaw to be "a clear and intelligible result which justifies itself throughout the whole Scripture"—to understand that "*spirit* represents the principle of life, *soul* the subject of life, and *heart* the organ of life; definitions which will be found to apply accurately to all the three constituent lives which the human being can lead—(a) the physical, (b) the mental and moral, (c) the spiritual and religious."

### III

How does St. Paul use these materials? For the most part he builds upon the Old Testament foundation, with hardly any modifications derived from what might be considered the prevailing influences of contemporary life. But the Apostle's Christian experience, with the strong lights and shadows thrown by it upon the whole field of human life, leads him to use the familiar words with deeply intensified meaning. It is not easy to represent this change in a sentence, since the varying shades of significance attaching to the words in different connections introduce an element of complexity. But it may perhaps be said very briefly that a new significance attaches to St. Paul's use of *πνεῦμα* as the highest part of human nature akin to the Divine: that *ψυχή* (soul),

<sup>1</sup> *Essays in Biblical Greek*, p. 108.

whilst often employed in its old sense, takes a lower position, and is sometimes even opposed to "spirit"; whilst the word "flesh" acquires a darker ethical connotation, though never in St. Paul's writings is man's material nature made the seat or source of evil. "Heart" is used in the New Testament practically in its Old Testament sense, and the same is true of "mind," except in a very few passages. The former of these two words is as important in the psychology of the New Testament as the latter is unimportant and rare.

"Soul," represented by *nephesh* in the Old Testament and *psuché* in the New Testament, is a word not often on St. Paul's lips; he uses it only a dozen times or so altogether. In half these instances it stands for "life," and has no ethical significance; but where it has, it stands, very appropriately, for the lower part of man's immaterial nature, the seat of the emotions and desires. These are too often prompted by bodily states, and are habitually opposed to the intellectual aspects of a life controlled by reason and its volitional aspects, which may be assumed to be under the direction of a well-trained will, ruling and subordinating the sensuous impulses of a nature without any higher principle to control it. Hence, as in 1 Cor. ii., the adjective "psychic" is opposed to "pneumatic"; the former being the "natural" man whose life is governed by the "soul" as the principle of emotional and earthly life, contrasted with the spiritual man, all the elements of whose life are under the control of the God-given principle of "spirit."

"Flesh" is used by St. Paul between 90 and 100 times, but only in about one-third of these is the ethical sense predominant. It is in interpreting these passages that modern scholars are least agreed as to

the exact shade of meaning intended. Some, including Pfleiderer and Holsten, seek to show that for St. Paul the fleshly nature of man was more than the channel of temptation, and they point to Rom. vii. 18 as proving that it is the very source of evil. Others, with whom Wendt and Professor Dickson<sup>1</sup> may be classed, would understand σάρξ in the Hebrew sense as concrete man in his creaturely capacity. Wernle says, "The Pauline conception of flesh seems to be a 'tertium quid'—something intermediate between Hellenism and Hebrewism." Dr. Bruce considers that Paul himself is obscure. But a satisfactory interpretation of the various shades of meaning found in St. Paul's Epistles is easily reached if we understand the word "flesh" to mean in the first instance the frail, perishable, creaturely nature of man viewed in itself and apart from Divine power and grace; thence, easily acquiring a tinge of moral frailty and weakness and sometimes of positive evil, handed on through the channel of the mortal body, but never reaching the Hellenic and Eastern conception of the essential evil of matter. To the present writer, at all events, it seems clear that St. Paul, who believed in the reality of Christ's body of flesh but held Him to have been essentially without sin, can never have intended to imply that the flesh, as such, was the seat of sin. But it is equally certain that man, left to himself, is not only weak as a creature, not only frail and mortal, but wayward and disobedient, selfish and evil, and it is not difficult to see how the milder meaning of "flesh" passed into a morally darker one. St. Paul is not concerned with philosophical theories; he is describing actual experiences, and mankind at

<sup>1</sup> See his monograph on "St. Paul's Use of the Terms Flesh and Spirit" in the Baird Lectures for 1883.

large has accepted some of his descriptions as chapters out of the life of every man. The flesh is not essentially evil, for nothing is good but a good will, and nothing is essentially bad but a bad one. It is, however, weak, and, left to itself, easily becomes evil, and in it, as so constituted, there dwells no good thing. In this sense "flesh lusts against spirit and spirit against flesh," and in this sense also every man who is Christ's has "crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts."

"Heart" is used by St. Paul about 50 times, following the Old Testament usage above described. It stands for the centre of man's life, intellectual, emotional and volitional. It must not be narrowed down, as it often is by English readers, to mean the feelings, as opposed to the reasoning powers. Paul's use of "mind" is perhaps the clearest example of a modification of Hebrew usage in favour of the Greek. It is employed more than 20 times to denote, not, as in classical Greek, the understanding only, but the practical reason as judging on moral questions. Hence, as we shall see, an ethical connotation attaches to it which the English word hardly permits.

But the word of highest importance in our present inquiry is *πνεῦμα* (spirit), which occurs nearly 150 times in St. Paul, though in only about 30 of these does it denote the immaterial nature of man in its higher aspects. These may be further subdivided, according to whether "spirit" means, as in the Old Testament, the God-given principle of life in every man, or his nature as regenerated by the power of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Accurate classification becomes impossible here, since several passages occupy a kind of borderland, in which no one can dogmatically say that the reference is to the Spirit

of God alone, or to the regenerated spirit of man alone, or to the natural faculty in which the Divine Spirit deigns to dwell. It must be said, however—in opposition to some highly respected authorities, including Delitzsch, Neander and others—that there is no ground for the view that the *πνεῦμα* in St. Paul is a faculty of which the natural man is destitute, and which is only imparted in regeneration. It is contrasted with “flesh” in many cases where regeneration has not taken place; it is used in connection with such words as disobedience and cowardice; and its occurrence in 2 Cor. vii. 1, “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,” shows that both parts of man’s nature have been stained with sin, and that both may be cleansed and renewed by grace.

Into the controversy concerning the tripartite nature of man it is not convenient here to enter. The preferable view, now very generally adopted, would seem to be that spirit, soul and flesh are in St. Paul, as elsewhere in the Bible, not three natures, but man’s nature viewed in three aspects. The spirit is the self-conscious life-principle given by God, in virtue of which man thinks and feels and wills. The soul is the personal being so constituted, and is descriptive of man’s natural, earthly life; while man, as flesh, inherits a frail, perishable body, which represents him on the outer and lower and material side. The whole man—body, soul and spirit—is redeemed by Christ, and is to be completely sanctified by the renewing power of the indwelling Spirit of God.

## IV

In the light of what has been said, what is St. Paul's teaching on the mode in which this renewal takes place, on the relation between the Divine Spirit, the human spirit and the complex constitution of human nature as a whole? No analysis of St. Paul's Epistles is possible here, but an examination of a few leading passages in his writings will guide us to an outline of his thought.

1. Where the Spirit of God or of Christ is expressly so named, or where the phrase, the Holy Spirit, is found, there can be no ambiguity. But *πνεῦμα* with the article, *the* Spirit, though not expressly termed Divine, may also have this meaning, as in 1 Cor. ii. 10. Some grammarians have laid it down that without the article only a Divine influence, not the Third Person in the Trinity, is intended, as in John xx. 21, "Receive ye Holy Spirit." But this is very doubtful, *ἄγιον πνεῦμα* being one of those phrases in which the specification of the article is not necessary. It is true, however, that the Holy Spirit is Himself both Giver and Gift, both Work and Worker, so that in some instances it is the inwrought grace of the Spirit assimilated by man that it is intended, rather than the Person of the Divine Agent operating.

2. The spirit as a faculty of human nature, self-conscious, allied to God, but not as regenerated by the Spirit of Christ, is to be understood in such passages as 1 Cor. ii. 11, "What man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of man that is in him?" Also 1 Cor. v. 5; xvi. 18, etc.

3. But in a large number of cases "spirit" means the highest part of man's nature, renewed by grace,

made the dwelling-place of the Divine Spirit and constituted the organ of the new life. Thus we read in Rom. viii. 10, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness"; and in viii. 15 we find mentioned the direct witness of the Spirit of God conjoined with the witness of the human spirit, which He inhabits and informs with new filial life.

4. Sometimes the word is found with a dependent genitive, as in such phrases as "the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," "the spirit of adoption," "the spirit of wisdom," "the spirit of power, love and discipline." In this case we must not be misled into interpreting St. Paul by modern phraseology. Such expressions do not mean a mere disposition, or frame of mind, or tendency, as in the expression, "the spirit of his speech was admirable." In many cases the allusion to the Holy Spirit is tolerably obvious, and in nearly all instances some indirect effect of His working is intended. It is impossible, however, always to show this in English, though we observe that in 2 Tim. i. 7, Dr. Weymouth translates "For the Spirit which God has given us is not a spirit of cowardice, but one of power and of love and of sound judgment." This rendering well brings out the direct operation of the Holy Spirit and the resulting spiritual state of the believer in whom He dwells.

## V

It remains only to show by an examination of a few passages the nature of the borderland between Divine and human indicated by the somewhat ambiguous use of "spirit" in St. Paul. These passages are valuable in their present form because they show

so clearly that the Apostle is describing an experience, not analyzing a mental process. He writes, not as a schoolman, but as a Christian.

The eighth chapter of Romans would furnish many illustrations. In verse 9, for example, the Spirit of God is definitely named and His indwelling specifically stated. The believer, however, is said to live, not "in the flesh," that is, in a sphere or region of fleshly influences, but "in the spirit," that is, under higher spiritual influence, the Revisers showing the distinction by their use of the capital letter. In the latter part of the verse, "Spirit of Christ" is often erroneously explained as if it were the spirit, or disposition, or frame of mind characteristic of Christ. The direct reference to the Holy Spirit must not be missed.

In 1 Cor. ii. 10, 13, the Divine Spirit must unquestionably be intended, but the revelation granted must be assimilated by the believer, who thus alone can receive spiritual truth. The phrase, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual," shows that such revelation may sometimes extend to the very words used, so that, in contrast with phraseology marked by human wisdom, the spiritual man "matches" spiritual words with the spiritual realities he seeks to express. Two passages from the same Epistle which describe the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are iii. 16 and vi. 19. Of these the former, "Ye are a temple of God and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you," should be understood collectively of the Church; the latter, "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit," should be interpreted of the individual Christian. The thought frequently recurs in St. Paul's Epistles, and the emphasis lies now upon the individual, now upon the Church collectively, as "a habitation of God in the Spirit." But,

obviously, neither of these two interpretations need exclude the other, the two being, indeed, mutually supplementary. The use of "spirit" in the paragraph 2 Cor. iii. 3-8 illustrates the blending of the human and the Divine from another side. The living epistles are written as by the finger of God Himself, "the Spirit of the living God," though on "tablets that are hearts of flesh." The spirit that giveth life, however, contrasted with the letter that killeth, is the result of the Divine operation, and "the ministration of the spirit" refers to the spiritually vivifying apostolic ministry, in contrast with the hardness, rigidity and condemnatory character of the Mosaic law.

A real difficulty occurs in the interpretation of 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. This is the only place in St. Paul's writings in which we find what has been called "confusion" between Christ and the Spirit. These verses appear to identify the two whom St. Paul is usually careful to distinguish. But the identification is one of function, not of existence. The interpolated phrase, "The Lord is the Spirit," means that "turning to the Lord" in verse 16 implies a turning to the true freedom engendered wherever His Spirit is at work. The last clause of verse 18, "even as from the Lord the Spirit" (Revised Version margin, "the Spirit which is the Lord"), must be understood in the same way. The transformation into the image of the Lord, accomplished by beholding and reflecting His glory, is essentially a spiritual operation. Only the Holy Spirit can effect it. Yet the whole process is so essentially that of Christ the Lord, whom the Spirit is glorifying in the believer, that the subtle and paradoxical expression, "as from the Lord who is the Spirit," or "the Spirit who is the Lord," is permissible. It is readily understood by the devout

heart, while it may be open to the cavils of the critical mind.

The Epistle to the Galatians furnishes ample ground for the student who would follow St. Paul's exposition of the things of the Spirit. The Revisers are no doubt right in rendering iii. 3, "having begun in the Spirit," *i. e.* a life originated and maintained by the Holy Spirit, though the latter clause, "perfected in the flesh," might seem to require the meaning, "having begun with the principles of a truly spiritual religion." Similarly in the fifth chapter we should support the direct reference to the Holy Spirit in passages sometimes understood as referring to the spiritual life in man. In verses 16 and 17, for example, the counter-influences at work in the regenerate man who is not yet entirely sanctified might seem to be both human, his own spirit and flesh being "contrary the one to the other." But that God's Spirit is intended seems clear from the context, "walk by the Spirit," in 16, and "led by the Spirit," in 18. The tendency of modern times is to resolve the Divine into the human, and many interpreters understand "walk by the spirit" as indicating merely a spiritual, not a fleshly, habit of life, and "led by the spirit" as the renewed principle of life adopted by the renewed man. This would seem, however, to be a shallow exegesis of St. Paul's deep mystical utterances. The Revisers are certainly right in their use of capital letters. If we live by the Spirit, St. Paul would say, as Christians certainly profess to do; if we draw our very existence from His inspiration, let us walk accordingly, and let our actual conduct, as well as the principle of our life, be determined by Him. For He is not only the source of our life and its living principle, but its motive energy. We are

to be led by the same Spirit—raised, wafted and borne on our way by His indwelling energy, and the steps of our earthly journey made easy and delightful, because ordered by Divine wisdom and animated by Divine might.

Over the rich and varied teaching of the Epistle to the Ephesians we must not linger. But in ii. 18 the phrase, “through Him” (*i. e.* Christ) “we have access in one Spirit unto the Father,” whilst it might mean, as some have said, access in one common disposition of prayer characteristic of Jew and Gentile, can to a careful student of St. Paul only mean access by virtue of our common vital union in and with the one Holy Spirit of God. The fact, however, that this interpretation is not universally accepted shows how closely united in Paul’s diction are the human and the Divine elements of the spiritual life in the renewed man and the renewed Church. The interpretation of Eph. iv. 3, 4, “the unity of the Spirit,” etc., follows on the same lines. In iv. 23, on the other hand, the human side predominates. “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind” must be understood in the light of Rom. xii. 2, “transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The *νοῦς*, or mind, itself is neutral; it stands for the principle of judgment or volition in moral action, which may be rightly or wrongly guided. St. Paul would say, whereas hitherto the intents and purposes of your actions have been guided by your own desires and these have repeatedly deceived you, let a new principle, spiritual in its character, be established, and perpetually renewed, so that you may prove in practice what is God’s perfect will, and yourselves be restored in character to His image of righteousness and true holiness.

What God has joined together, man must not put

asunder. The gracious ambiguity of some of St. Paul's expressions can deceive no one. The reason why in some passages it is difficult to say whether the immediate working of the Spirit of God is intended, or the result of His operation reflected in the human spirit, is that these two are strangely and deeply one. We are in the Spirit if He is in us. And without the Spirit of Christ Himself at work within us we can do nothing.



## THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

*“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.”—  
1 COR. xii. 4.*

*“I had rather speak five words with my understanding . . .  
than ten thousand words in a tongue.”—1 COR. xiv. 19.*

*“The great conception of the New Testament . . . that in  
the action of the personal Spirit there is a manifestation of the  
divine freedom, whether in the form of the miracles which  
were wrought by our Lord Himself in the power of the Spirit,  
or in supernatural ‘gifts,’ or in the ethical and spiritual changes  
which are the result of the work of the Spirit in the higher life  
of man.”—R. W. DALE.*

*“When tongues shall cease, and power decay,  
And knowledge empty prove,  
Do thou thy trembling servants stay  
With faith, with hope, with love.”—REGINALD HEBER.*

## IV

### THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

THE earliest Christian community was Spirit-filled. The exact meaning of this phrase could only be brought out by examination of the passages in the Acts and Epistles which describe the phenomenon. The variety of operations of the Spirit in the world, as described in the Old Testament, is paralleled by the variety of His operations in the Church, as described in the New. But the agent is one and the same Spirit, dividing to each severally as He will. It is noteworthy that Father, Son and Spirit are associated together in 1 Cor. xii. 4-7, the Three being One; but the executive power is the Spirit, discernible amidst all diversities of workings.

The general impression left is clear. The early history of the Church recorded in the Acts is a kind of extended Pentecost. On that day a pellucid spring of new life is seen pouring forth from the mountain-side, and the first years of the Church show us the course of the stream, in its pristine freshness and purity, the first effervescence of what can only be described as a *Vita Nuova*, a New Life. The Spirit is the name given to the animating energy of that new life, the sum of all the celestial influences at work to follow up and deeply impress the new revelation of God made in Jesus Christ His Son. Those who belonged to the new "Way," as it came to be

called, were marked by new views, new tempers, new aims, but especially by a new spirit of unity and a fresh access of courage. In Acts iv. 31, 32 the being filled with the Holy Ghost is synonymous with speaking the word of God with boldness and with a cementing power in the multitude which made them to be of one heart and of one soul. Intense spiritual energy was needed thus to fuse and thus to inspire the obscure and ignorant men who were to conquer the world. Von Dobschütz says in his picture of the time, "It was in the full sense of the word a communion of the Spirit which consisted in a continuous and incredibly intensified enthusiasm, in an inspiration which exalted every faculty to the manifestation of miracle even in the natural domain. To this Spirit nothing was impossible. He found utterance in ecstatic speech, imparted hidden mysteries, and made prophets and teachers of the uncultured. He inspired every sort of manifestation of ministering love, of guiding wisdom, of self-sacrificing devotion. He performed miracles, healed diseases, moved mountains, and transformed men, who felt themselves miserable and oppressed, into a cloud of witnesses overflowing with strength and courage."<sup>1</sup>

## I

The characteristic word for these various manifestations was *χαρίσματα*, gifts of grace, "spiritual gifts" which were indeed earnestly to be coveted. Gunkel's definition of the workings of the Holy Spirit as "certain mysterious powers operating in the range of the life of men . . . and which belong only to such as are not unworthy of a connection with God"

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Life in the Primitive Church*, E. T., pp. 15, 16.

is too vague and loose. Instead of beginning with a definition, it will be well to examine the illustrations given in Acts and Epistles and see what features they possess in common.

They have been variously stated and classified. Sometimes a distinction has been drawn between natural and supernatural gifts, or between gifts transient and permanent, or between those which heightened the intellectual faculties and those which elevated the moral character. Such distinctions belong to a later period; they may help to a right understanding of the phenomena, or may be only misleading. The history recorded in the Acts supplies a commentary upon such lists as St. Paul gives in 1 Cor. xii. On the whole the parallels are close, though here and there is to be found a puzzling discrepancy. But both history and lists of gifts imply a picture of a new type of life, with little sense of such a distinction between natural and supernatural as would appear to a modern observer to be fundamental. The habit of mind of the early Church differed from ours in this regard: we plume ourselves on our superior discrimination, how far legitimately may be questioned. The early Christians had not, of course, a modern knowledge of the order of nature, and herein we are better informed than they. They had, however, a vivid sense of the presence and power of God in their midst, a sense of the natural-supernatural, as Carlyle would call it, which is in no way inconsistent with a knowledge of the reign of law, and which it would be an immense gain if the modern world could recapture.

Classification of gifts will not help much. Schmiedel, in his article on the subject in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, suggests a division into "three great cate-

gories," as in 1 Cor. xii. 4-5, *χαρίσματα* charisms, *διακονίατ* ministries and *ἐνεργήματα* works, and his remarks upon details, as suggested by St. Paul's words, deserve study. But sharp distinctions, and hard and fast lines of classification, are to be deprecated. In any arrangement some will be found to lie on the border-lines, unless violence is used to fit them in with principles adopted a priori.

We find, however, the following distinctions more or less clearly appearing—

1. Gifts which would now be described as supernatural: Prophecy. Tongues; interpretation of tongues; and, perhaps, discerning of spirits. Healings. Miracles, generally.
2. Gifts which might be described as extraordinary endowments, such as: Wisdom. Visions. Wonder-working Faith.
3. Gifts which were granted for the purpose of service, such as: Helps. Governments. Ministries.
4. Gifts such as would now be called graces of character, imparted in an extraordinary degree, but of an ethical and spiritual kind, due to the faithful use of natural gifts and faculties. Such were the joy and unity and courage of which mention has been made, and which constituted such a distinguishing feature of the first generation of Christians.

## II

In subsequent days tendencies have appeared, now to over-estimate, and now to under-estimate, the meaning and value of these gifts of grace. Language is sometimes used as if only in this first generation of

Christianity were the true golden days, a high-water mark never to be reached again by degenerate Christians, a period distinguished especially by miraculous powers, which constituted a kind of overflow from the time when the Son of God wrought many mighty works. But this rests upon a false understanding of miracles. Signs in the sense of portents to make men gape and wonder Christ always refused to work. He set faith in Himself first, though He added, "Or else believe Me for the very work's sake," as He had said, "That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, Arise and Walk." So the "works" and "healings" of the Apostles were not prodigies, but were all of them wrought "through faith in His name," the great object being to set forth the power of the One Name given under heaven for salvation, when rightly used by those who owned allegiance to it. Powers of this kind as existing in the primitive Church are recognized both in the Acts and in the Epistles, but in neither are they markedly prominent.

On the other hand, the prevailing disposition of late has been to under-estimate the miraculous element, explaining it away if possible, or bringing it under the category of unknown law. The extreme rationalism which denies utterly the possibility of miracle, attributing the otherwise inexplicable to hallucination or credulity, is not scientific, and it would prevent the advance of science if the same spirit were carried into the region of psychology, for example. But the truly scientific spirit, which claims that the law of parsimony should be applied to all stories of professedly miraculous events, and which demands in every instance as satisfactory evidence as the case permits, is now characteristic of all careful inquiries,

scientific or theological. The important point is to preserve the unity of the one Divine kingdom, natural and supernatural, under one Head. The line of demarcation between these two great provinces of God's kingdom is not always easy to draw. As the generations pass the boundary line is not always to be found in the same place. Its course is largely determined by our knowledge of what can, and what cannot, be explained by means of known facts, laws and principles. God's manifestation of Himself, so far as this can be conveyed in the detailed order unfolded by science, is not the whole of life. The natural order serves rather as a frame for a picture, a background against which stand out the more significant lines of personal revelation, which in itself is not out of order, but is not explicable by the laws which determine phenomena in the lower sphere. How much is possible to the human spirit under the direct influence of the Divine? The wise man will answer, I do not know and cannot draw a boundary line. He will add, however, that he does recognize certain limits which God Himself appears to have laid down for His own action, that these will not lightly be overpassed, that men—not of one age only—are often credulous and superstitious. He recognizes that it is a mistake to multiply unnecessarily instances of the miraculous, and that the Church has suffered before this by having to bear as a burden imposed upon faith the task of maintaining the truth of miracles for which there was no sufficient evidence. But St. Paul, in his two lists of "gifts" in 1 Cor. xii., does not hint for a moment that some are "natural" and that others again are beyond nature. His comment is, The same Lord worketh all, in all.

Those which would be styled supernatural in

modern times are prophecies, tongues and healings; though in the treatment of these it will be seen that the working of natural laws is not to be excluded. "Prophecy" in the New Testament, as in the Old, is not mainly prediction and not necessarily "supernatural." Prophecy is not to be confused with mantic, the art of the diviner, the ecstatic utterance of a soothsayer beside himself. Weinel's parallels, drawn from history in the early and middle ages down to the Irvingites of the nineteenth century, illustrate rather the gift of "tongues." "Healings" appear to imply miracle, unless indeed the psychotherapy of modern times be erected into a science and be considered capable of "explaining"—what the wisest do not as yet profess to understand—the action and reaction of body upon mind and mind upon body. It may be said in passing that the whole treatment of this subject in our generation is an illustration of the danger of drawing artificial and arbitrary lines of distinction between "natural" and "supernatural" phenomena.

### III

The Gift of Tongues requires separate handling. Two accounts have come down to us, one by St. Luke in Acts ii., the other by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians. Between these there appears to be discrepancy. The usual method now is to take St. Paul's account as guide, since it is at the same time more direct, fuller and more intelligible than the brief reference in the Acts.

From 1 Cor. xiv. we learn that the utterances known by the name "Tongues" were not with the *voīs* or understanding of the speaker—which was

“unfruitful”—and that they were not intelligible to the hearers, an interpreter being necessary. The speaker might himself be edified, as one who had been in a spiritual ecstasy, but no edification was conveyed to others. The utterance was not of the nature of ordinary prayer, or praise, addressed to God, or of prophecy addressed to man; yet the speaker might be said to “speak to himself and to God,” and the speaker might pray or praise with the spirit, or with the understanding, or with both. The “tongue” was contrasted with revelation, knowledge and teaching; the great drawback to its exercise was that it did not contain these important elements of education. Paul desires to pray, to sing and to bless or give thanks  $\tau\hat{\omega}$  *rot* with the understanding as well as  $\epsilon\nu$   $\pi\nu\epsilon\mu\alpha\tau\iota$  in the spirit; and while the power of ecstatic utterance had been granted to him in the highest known measure, he preferred the ability to speak but five words that might benefit others to ten thousand words that were of no use to any but himself.

The question has often been asked whether these utterances were mere inarticulate noises, or words in no intelligible order, or pious but incoherent ejaculations, or whether there be any room for the idea that foreign languages were spoken. The last alternative, suggested by the account in Acts of the day of Pentecost, receives no support from 1 Cor. xiv. The “interpretation of tongues” appears to have no connection with translation from a foreign language. The parallels from the history of Montanism, of the Camisards in the seventeenth century, of Methodism in the eighteenth century and Irvingism in the nineteenth, would indicate that these voices may have been partially intelligible sounds poured out under intense

spiritual excitement. Those nearest our own time, in Edward Irving's Church in 1832, were, according to Mr. Oliphant's account, not utterly unintelligible, but they certainly contained no intrinsic evidence of supernatural, or divine, origin. Irving's own account was that when "the power" fell the speaker was moved to sighs and tears and unutterable groanings, to joy and mirth and exultation, and that his utterance was "a regularly formed, well-proportioned discourse, which evidently wanteth only the ear of him whose native tongue it is to make it a very masterpiece of powerful discourse." The specimens given of utterances in known tongues are only passionate religious ejaculations, though all agree that the tones of these "passionate cadences and wild raptures of prophetic repetition" were most impressive, always thrilling and sometimes overawing the hearers.

It has often been argued that the account in Acts is inconsistent with the account in Paul. As they stand it is difficult to reconcile the two. Some would delete *ἐτέπαι* in Acts ii. 4 as an interpolation. Others interpret the miracle on the day of Pentecost as one of hearing rather than of speech. According to this view the Apostles had not miraculously conferred upon them the power to speak in other languages, but just as the deaf may learn a lip-language and be enabled to understand a speaker by his use of eye and face and gesture, so the Apostles' hearers had special power of perception and comprehension bestowed upon them. This, however, is far-fetched and hardly warranted by St. Luke's phraseology. It is much more probable that in these two separate documents we have two distinct accounts from diverse points of view of what was at best a strange phenomenon. There is no trustworthy indication from any

other quarter of a miraculous power to speak in a foreign language being granted to an Apostle or to any one else. Such a gift is not in harmony with the New Testament miracles, and if it had actually been given it must have left a distinct mark in the records of the Church. This is not the kind of miracle that the Holy Spirit grants to men carrying His message, who in every age must toil and study, if they are to preach to men of other tongues.

But it does not follow that St. Luke's account is wholly mistaken. The fact of interpretation points to some kind of intelligible meaning attaching to the words, when heard with sympathy and insight, such as the Spirit gave. Gunkel adduces the cry "Abba, Father" as an illustration of an outpouring partly in Aramaic and partly in Greek, and the two watchwords mentioned in 1 Cor. xii. 3, Christ is Lord! and Christ be Anathema! may be specimens of condensed utterances freely uttered in great religious excitement. We shall probably be not far from the mark if we understand the tongues to have been ecstatic outpourings, in which men were led themselves very near to God by the power of the Spirit, but their expressions were so incoherent when they were thus beside themselves, that the help of others was needed to translate them into terms which could be understood by those who did not share the spiritual rapture. Nothing in later history warrants the idea of any continuance of this charism. St. Paul's account shows why it was comparatively useless. What he himself saw in ecstasy, as in 2 Cor. xii., he did not attempt to repeat. Rapture is not inspiration. Ecstasy, as is shown in the history of Catherine, Teresa and many another saint in the Roman calendar, injures the body, disturbs the mental

balance and, as in St. Paul's case, may tend to a state of spiritual self-confidence which requires a thorn in the flesh to prevent it from being morally mischievous. Yet rapture has its place in the worship of the individual and the Church, if "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."

#### IV

It is characteristic of the gift of prophecy that it is distinguished from the gift of wisdom on the one hand and of tongues on the other. The *voûs*, as we should say the intellect, is engaged, but its operation in examination and reflection is not the main factor in prophecy. A careful reading of the graphic description in 1 Cor. xiv. shows that St. Paul means by prophecy the power to preach under the direct, immediate and more or less overpowering influence of the Spirit so as mightily to convince the hearers, lay bare the secrets of their hearts, to teach, exhort and comfort, the prophet being swayed by a power not his own, which yet did not use him as a mere passive instrument or vehicle. The seer of the Old Testament had powers of perception into spiritual truth, sometimes of conditionally declaring the future, the power of utterance so as to move and sway his hearers, perhaps imagination sufficient to see and record visions of great practical import, and throughout to speak as a man with a message, not "from himself." The New Testament prophet, about whom we have much less information—though the Apocalypse forms one striking example of his gift—was apparently a worthy successor of the same order. The element of revelation, not necessarily of entirely new truth, entered into his speech, which might some-

times be ecstatic, though it was not usually so. The power was spontaneous and came from above. If any man speak, says St. Peter, let him speak as it were oracles of God. The utterance was recognizable by the hearers as beyond the unassisted powers of man. Dr. Lindsay describes the prophets as "men of spiritual insight and magnetic speech." Such they were, but undoubtedly they were more than this, unless by magnetic we understand something higher than the sacred eloquence which will now inexplicably thrill and move the hearers. These men spoke under such an immediate, personal afflatus of the Holy Spirit that the gift was not communicable, transmissible; it was one of the first to disappear from the Church. False prophets counterfeited the true, or gave forth such a faint echo of the sonorous tones of the original that their message sounded like a parody. Lingering traces of the gift are found in Irenæus and Tertullian, but long before their time the teacher and presbyter had taken the place of the prophet. The vision splendid by which the youthful Church had been on its way attended too soon faded into the light of common day. Had the Church been more faithful, the light of common day would have been the most splendid of all.

The gift of discerning spirits is handled not very sympathetically by Schmiedel in his article already referred to. He says that "it involves in principle a complete abandonment of belief in suggestion of the Holy Spirit." It would seem, however, to indicate naturally enough another mode of operation of the One Divine Leader. When all kinds of spiritual influences were at work, many men claiming Divine power and guidance, good men differing sometimes in their judgment as to what the voice of the Spirit

really said, the gift of judgment, of insight, of fine discrimination, would be needed by all and granted in special measure to some. An example of such "discerning of spirits" is found in 1 John iv. 1-3, where a practical test of doctrine is suggested which is, indeed, a kind of echo of St. Paul's distinction in 1 Cor. xii. 3, the criterion between false and true being the acknowledgment that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." Simon Magus is not the only man in the history of the Church who has desired power for power's sake. He has gained an evil notoriety because he sought to purchase a gift with money, but the usual weakness of the ecclesiastic is to covet too earnestly and cling too tenaciously to spiritual power which he uses often for his own ends in the Lord's name. There is needed in the modern as in the ancient Church the power to discern spirits, and there is no mode of gaining it but by the unconditional acknowledgment of the sovereignty of Christ and under the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit.

## V

One of the most interesting parts of this study it is for several reasons impossible here to pursue in detail. The heightening of the ordinary faculties for the service of the Church is indicated by the mental gifts of "wisdom" and "knowledge," the power of working in "faith" and "healings," and the faculty of administration in "helps," "governments" and "ministries."

Each one of these words would repay careful examination. Some of them take us back to the list of seven gifts of the Spirit in Isa. xi. Of the Messianic scion of the dynasty of David it is there said that the

spirit of Jahweh shall rest upon him and he "shall draw his breath in quick delight" as he lives in the fear of the Lord. Six gifts are to be his, arranged in three pairs—

Wisdom and understanding, moral and intellectual. Good counsel beforehand, and brave execution in act. Direct knowledge of the God he serves, and awe-struck but cheerful readiness in all things to obey Him.

The "wisdom" and "revelation" spoken of by St. Paul, while they do not shut out the need of effort and acquisition on the part of man, emphasize the inwrought grace of God which prepares teachers by the gift of an insight that no study can impart. "Faith," on the other hand, is more closely associated with the will. It indicates the mighty spiritual energy characteristic of a man who trusts with all his soul. In human history there has been no power like it. Mountains have been removed by it and sycamine trees plucked up and cast into the sea. Men of culture and education too often lack it, though there is no reason why it should not be theirs; but wherever it is found pure, nothing is impossible to it. Stephen, as a man full alike of faith and the Holy Ghost, was not only a Christian protomartyr, but a prototype of such faith as the Church needs to-day, for unless this channel of the Holy Spirit's operation be clear, His presence and energy remain ineffective.

"Ministries" are, or may be, spiritual gifts. Ecclesiastical administration is so often unspiritual that it is refreshing to think of helps and governments under this highest control of all. Doles and charities may be means of proselytizing; sanitation and social reformation may be utilized in partisan politics; "governments" may be another name for the worst

kind of tyranny, the autocracy of those who presume to rule in the name of Christ and His Church. But when giving and helping, organizing and arranging, leading and planning are the outflow of one indwelling energy, itself inspired by the love of Christ and the power of the Spirit, there are few gifts that can surpass these.

It is well worth asking whether the Church of to-day has learned all that she needs to know from the chapters which tell us of the gifts of the Spirit in the primitive Church. Granted that some of these, brilliant at the time, were transient, and intended to be so, is the level along which the Church should move under the leadership of the Spirit sufficiently maintained? The Spirit of prophesying, is it extinct? and ought it to be so? The complex organization of modern times with its graded courts, its votes and majorities, its multiplied offices and officers, is it under the control of the only Power that can enable it to do its work? And in the life of the individual Christian, was the standard of the Church in Corinth in A.D. 58 abnormally high as regards wisdom and revelation, knowledge and discernment of spirits, the power to believe and the power to teach? Might it not be expected that the standard of a Christian country in the twentieth century after Christ would be indefinitely higher? These are questions easier to ask than to answer. But one thing is certain. If there be any failure or deficiency it does not lie either in the power or the will of that Spirit without whom nothing is strong, nothing holy, but in whom and with whom the Church can achieve all things.



## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

*“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, meekness, self-control: against such there is no law.”—GAL. v. 22, 23.*

*“Take Love, wherewith thou wilt ever go straightly, exactly, lightly, attentively, swiftly, enlightenedly, without error, without guide and without the means of other creatures; since love sufficeth unto itself to do all things without fear or weariness, so that martyrdom itself appears to it a joy.”—CATHERINE OF GENOA.*

*“Be good at the depths of you, and you will discover that those who surround you will be good at the same depths.”—M. MAETERLINCK.*

*“And every virtue we possess,  
And every victory won,  
And every thought of holiness,  
Are His alone.”*

—H. AUBER.

# V

## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

“COVET earnestly the best gifts,” said St. Paul, “and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.” The gifts of the Spirit are wisdom, revelation, prophecy, miracles, helps, governments; the fruit of the Spirit is—love. Though I know all mysteries and all knowledge, though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, but have not love, I am nothing. Why? The answer to such a simple question reveals the characteristic attitude of Christ and His chief Apostle, alas! not always that of Christendom. As we review the centuries of Christian history, it seems as if it had proved impossible for the Church to preserve this original standpoint of our religion and its standard as soaring above not only ordinary practice, but ordinary standards of life and conduct. Creed, ritual and ethics are three central themes of religion, but no one of them rightly represents the Christian spirit and characteristic attitude towards life, which should embrace all, keeping each in its right place. Christianity ought to mean in every man a reconstitution of his whole nature in relation to God and his fellows, and this means the renewal of his inmost spirit by the indwelling of the Divine. This is the central reality; then thought, worship, regulation of conduct, social relations, will all be rightly ordered, the stream flowing purely forth from a purified foun-

tain. But whenever metaphysical definitions of doctrine, theories of church government, codes of moral casuistry, or schemes of social reform usurp the chief place in Christian thought and effort, true relations are perverted, and the result is as sounding brass, as clanging cymbals. "Make the tree good and its fruit good," said the Master; the tree is the human spirit renewed by the Divine Spirit, and the fruit is—love, joy, peace and the golden cluster of ripened graces, "against which there is no law"!

## I

Christian ethics has a fundamental character of its own. This will appear from the contrast between the Four Cardinal or Classical Virtues of Paganism, and the Three Theological Virtues of Scholastic Ethics. Wisdom, courage, temperance, justice represent the four points of the moral compass among the Greeks. These will secure the harmony and health of the soul, wisdom being the highest, and justice in a sense the sum and substance of the four. Christianity undervalues none of these. There has been indeed a false wisdom, a knowledge in name only, which has puffed up men of the Greek type in all times and countries, a Gnosis which ends in Gnosticism, mischievous in all centuries from the second to the twentieth. True wisdom is one of the Spirit's best gifts, and Christ is made both to Jew and Greek the very wisdom of God. Courage? Where has it been more robustly shown than in the valour of Paul the Christian hero? God gave us not a spirit of cowardice, he cries, but of power and love and discipline. The last word is substantially the same as that for the third cardinal virtue—true sanity and self-control, such as every

real man desires to gain, but of which only the Christian possesses the full secret. As for justice—if one sought for a single word to serve as a key to the whole of St. Paul's life and teaching, *δικαιοσύνη*, righteousness, would certainly be chosen as its characteristic theme.

The ethical difference in Christianity is not one of words, or order, or emphasis, but of fundamental conception and ideal. It is a question of the centre of gravity of character, of the central orb in the stellar system, the pole-star of mind and heart. Aristotle makes man, Jesus and Paul make God, the centre of human existence. As the Greek philosopher phrased it, everything in ethics turns upon the *τέλος*, the end, the aim, the ruling purpose. Nature can only be discovered when the goal is reached; potential capacity and right determination form the subject-matter of ethics. What the nature and end of man were in the scheme of Aristotle are still studied in classic phrases which are likely to last as long as humanity itself because of the masterly grasp of the subject they exhibit, from the writer's characteristic point of view. What is the chief end of man? The answer of the Shorter Catechism is also classical in its way—To glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever. The term “theological virtues” is due to the schoolmen, and in modern ears the title is not a happy one. But Thomas Aquinas shows the reason why the epithet was given—because “virtues” in the Christian religion have God for their object, bring man into true relation with God, and are imparted by God alone. What man ought to be depends on what man is capable of becoming and on how he sets about attaining his ends. On these fundamental points Pagan and Christian utterly differ, and as they face in

different directions, so, with many ideas in common, they none the less tread different paths.

The three Theological Virtues, Faith, Hope and Love, are not virtues, neither are they theological. They represent rather three states or three aspects of one state—which determine the very springs of action and lie at the root of all conduct. “They are not merely personal graces,” says Dr. T. B. Strong in his Bampton Lectures, “but they force every one who possesses them into relation with a wider end than any which can fall within the sphere of a single life. All three of them have their real importance in the fact that they connect man with God and with a spiritual order in which man’s life finds its place.”<sup>1</sup> If the term three Christian graces be used, it points to an undeserved gift from God, our relation to Him springing out of His gracious relation to us. Here, as elsewhere in Christianity, it is not we who plan and originate and devise, but He first, both for us and in us.

Revelation comes first, then our reception of it; inspiration first, then our response to the new stimulus; God’s love first, then man’s in return. As Christmas Evans used to say, God’s love is an ocean, man’s response a dewdrop, and that dewdrop stained by sin. Faith, Hope and Love are, all and each of them, a response. Faith opens the whole nature to God as revealed in Christ, Hope points to high possibilities which He holds out, and Love is the means of securing them. But it would be a mistake to take St. Paul’s “first three” mentioned at the climax of his hymn to love in 1 Cor. xiii. as if these were logically exhaustive of the Christian life. Nor are the lists of virtues contained in Gal. v., Col. iii.

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Ethics*, p. 85.

and Phil. iv. drawn up as with plane and T-square, a geometrical diagram of excellence. The words are not carelessly or arbitrarily chosen, but neither are they arranged in logically systematized order. It may serve as an epigram to say that faith founded the Church, hope has sustained it, and it remains for love to reform it. But the three great names might be reduced to two, hope being considered a form of faith, or even to one, for it is "faith working by love" that avails.

## II

The main point for the moment is to consider what is meant by the lovely group of Christian graces mentioned together in Gal. v. 22, 23 as the fruit of the Spirit. A contrast is drawn with the "works of the flesh." Flesh means here human nature in its frailty and corruption, viewed apart from God;—what man is by nature, together with the darker possibilities that loom in the future apart from God and His grace. These "works" make a black list, nineteen in number; though the number might have been either reduced or extended, the series is grimly representative. (1) Sensuality and uncleanness in all their enticing and debasing forms; (2) idolatry, as summing up all evils which arise from putting anything in the place of God; (3) selfishness as root producing a coarse, rank crop of "enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings"—what section of society does not know these disturbers of the peace, and who could not add to their number? (4) Intemperance standing for all kinds of self-indulgence, to which many a man who would scorn the charge of drunkenness succumbs ignominiously every day.

Works of the flesh? Some of these seem to be the products of the world and the course of this world in human society; others of the devil, who is always busy with spiritual temptations; others are of the flesh, in the sense of the sensual side of human nature yielding to such temptations and becoming corrupted accordingly. After nearly twenty centuries of Christianity the power of these evil forces is not broken in human life and civilization, the wheel of their mischievous progress is barely scotched. The British Empire, if it be not the foremost, is certainly not the most backward state in Christian civilization, yet how predominant in it still are many of these works of the flesh! The brutal image of the Bull-god in the British Museum is made by D. G. Rossetti to stand for the country in which it now stands, not that from which it came.

“Those heavy wings spread high,  
So sure of flight, which do not fly:  
That set gaze never on the sky:  
Those scripted flanks it cannot see;  
Its crown a brow-contracting load,  
Its planted feet which trust the sod. . . .  
O Nineveh, was this thy God,—  
Thine also, mighty Nineveh?”

Who that has seen it can forget Watts’ picture of Mammon, with its crown of gold coins, the money-bags in its lap, crushing into the mire the vigour of youth and the charm of fresh sweet womanhood? But it is the huge, immovable, intolerable *weight* of the whole brutish figure which stamps it as the very embodiment of the flesh and all its works, a coarse, cruel, impregnable monster of iniquity, by its very presence blocking the way against all true life of the Spirit.

It is almost necessary to sketch in this dark back-

ground in order to do justice to St. Paul's exquisite contrasted picture. Love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness—these are fair blossoms and fruit of a fair tree, the gracious outcome of new celestially implanted life; if these lovely clusters do not grow upon this tree, they cannot appear at all. The branches in the true Vine must and will bloom in flowers that must and will end in fruit.

But all is from and through the indwelling Spirit. Philosophers are jealous of the introduction of religion into ethics, but history and experience confirm St. Paul's natural history of the Christian graces. When the human spirit alone encounters the flesh, it is constantly worsted. Not perhaps at first, or obviously; victory of a kind and for a time may be gained, but the human spirit by itself has no sufficient power of leverage, and if it be not entirely overcome by the flesh it is apt to lose its strength and beauty. But with the new point of origin, the new aims and new motive-power that are gained when the soul is rooted and grounded in the love of God, energy is furnished for better things. Here also is provided a resting and rallying place on which the discouraged spirit may fall back when discouraged by failure or overwhelmed by defeat. It is reanimated, reinvigorated by mighty Unseen Allies, chariots and horses of fire—"they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

Spontaneity is necessary for beauty and power of character. It is a well-grounded objection against the virtues of the moral philosopher that they are so difficult to obtain, and when attained by much effort, are so stiff and artificial as to be without true grace and beauty. These are not the outflow of life, but the products of design. Nature has not learned the secret of that supernatural beauty.

“I saw, I felt it once—but where?  
I knew not yet the gauge of time,  
Nor wore the manacles of space;  
I felt it in some other clime,  
I saw it in some other place.  
’Twas when the heavenly house I trod,  
And lay upon the breast of God.”

The Spirit who breathes where He lists alone can charm that beauty from the skies to the earth. The Spirit upholds, inspires, animates, because He informs from within, and He alone can enable man to attain the spontaneity of free and gracious service under conditions so unfavourable as the life of frail mortal man in the midst of the world. A serene outflow of spiritual life is only possible when it is not the result of self-centred, toilsome effort, but when a Higher Spirit within originates and maintains it; when His light shines through, His stream of inspiration pours forth and His life is manifested even through the hampering and disfiguring garments which swathe the limbs and impede the movements. Life is there if the Spirit is there. Fruit from such life is inevitable, imperishable, inexhaustible.

### III

The fruit of the Spirit is Love. This one word in English has to cover a thousand meanings, and in no shade of meaning can it be fully adequate for its purpose. The instinctive love of bird and animal, the tender affection of close family union, the passionate ardour of youth and maid, the pure disinterestedness of friendship—the same word that includes all these meanings is profaned to describe the ease of good nature, the gloating of lust, the tepid development of liking, and the *amor intellectualis* of Spinoza,

cold, dry and sublime, an affection wherewith man may regard the One Substance God, not expecting any regard in return! What wonder that when Christians began to speak of love they found a new word necessary—*ἀγαπή*, which, however, the Church has not been able to preserve pure amidst the stains and smirches of the smoke-grimed cities of men. Yet love shines on, bringing its own light; “from heaven it came, to heaven returneth,” but not before it has purified the hearts and gladdened the homes of all who would give it welcome amid the sin and sorrow of the world.

We love because He first loved us. Hope makes not ashamed because God’s love is poured abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit given unto us. The order must be observed. God is love in fount and origin; from His love as a Father flow forth all the rays of light that illuminate and gladden the universe. God is love in fullest manifestation; His only Son in uttermost self-sacrifice alone can show the length and breadth and depth and height of a love that passes knowledge. God is love also in gracious diffusion and self-impartation; only the Holy Spirit taking of the things of love to show to the unloving children of men can pour abroad in their hearts the streams of grace that will make human life a watered garden. The fruit of the Spirit is love.

Here most of all we see the need, not of virtues, habits, modes of action, but of deep abiding life, such as will bring the human spirit into right relation with God and keep it there. Often a measure of spiritual life is present, but it does not possess sufficient motive power; or it does not rise to a sufficiently high level; or it is not sufficiently assimilated, it is worn as a garment which hardly fits the man himself; or is not

uniformly and adequately maintained. The reason in all cases is the same. Only love to God can maintain the steady outflow of spiritual life in any man; only God's love in Christ can suffice to arouse and sustain that love in man's heart; only the power of the Holy Spirit is sufficient to kindle the human fire from the flame of the heavenly. In Rom. v. 6 the figure is not that of the animating flame, but of the refreshing streams which can revivify even a desert. The fountain in the East is the "eye" of the landscape. In millions of families pure affection is the spring of joy which makes life tolerable in a dull house under grey skies. And in the realm of the higher ethics love is the one thing the world lacks and the one thing it cannot supply. As a milligramme of radium will sustain its temperature for years, so the heart which is made the home of the Divine Paraclete, pouring forth continually the power of Divine pity and mercy to melt hardness, subdue selfishness and quicken service, can manifest continually joy, peace, gentleness, goodness—all the gracious currents of the one pure stream. For the fruit of the Spirit is love.

Why does it come first? Why last in 1 Cor. xiii. 13? The same answer serves for both questions. Love is the origin, as it is the goal—the essence of salvation now and itself the blessedness of glory for ever. It is the fulfilling of the law, all the precepts of all the codes summed up in a word. The wise man in Proverbs had a glimpse of the truth—"love covers all transgressions." Even "a certain lawyer" acknowledged its excellence when the Master announced as the first commandments in the law, Thou shalt love. St. Paul and St. John vie in extolling its power, but alike they point to the Holy Spirit as the Source and Spring of all. Men praise knowledge and power, but

neither of these suffices for the structure of life. Knowledge puffs up, love builds up. Knowledge can be shared by few, it raises more questions and difficulties than it solves, and when it is successful it inflates with such a sense of self-importance that in its work among men it cannot build up the structure of society. The demons have their share of knowledge, and it causes them to shudder. But man is made for better things. Browning, who seemed by nature a poet of knowledge, has made himself the poet of love.

“So let us say—not Since we know, we love,  
But rather, Since we love, we know enough.”

And again, in almost his last words—

“I have faith such end shall be:  
From the first, Power was—I knew;  
Life has made clear to me  
That, strive but for closer view,  
Love were as plain to see.

When see? When there dawns a day,  
If not on the homely earth,  
Then yonder, worlds away,  
Where the strange and new have birth,  
And Power comes full in play.”

The poet may be content to wait and dream, but man needs love here on the homely earth, and there is only one perennial fountain. When heavenly love in quest of heavenly beauty flows forth from the one indwelling Spirit of Love, all the rest follows. St. Paul’s hymn in its praise in 1 Cor. xiii. shows how love includes all graces—longsuffering, kindness, humility, patience, hope; for—

“Life, with all it yields of joy, or woe,  
Or hope, or fear—believe the aged friend—  
Is just our chance of the prize of learning love,  
What love has been, may be indeed, and is.”

The definition of hell is a place from which love is shut out. And when the firstfruits of the Spirit are seen in love, heaven is begun below.

#### IV

Joy and peace come next—another indication that St. Paul is not compiling a list of virtues. These are two subjective states which may make for happiness, but can hardly find a place among enjoined duties—unless at last we come to see that the Christian conception of duty is the enjoyment and use of privilege, and that the possibility of privilege brings duty in its train.

Joy and Peace: these two sisters are closely related, the one with brighter eye, more animated expression and more exuberant energy; the other with more tranquil and self-controlled benignity, benediction in her very glance. They are two stones most precious; Joy with the warm glow of ruby or jasper, Peace with the radiant purity of pearl or sapphire. Grades of enjoyment are known amongst men, that rise one above another like the steps of a celestial staircase—(1) pleasure; (2) happiness; (3) joy; (4) blessedness. The lower or the higher name is appropriate according to whether the emotion be temporary or permanent, according to the part of man's nature that is gratified, according to the degree in which his happiness depends upon circumstances and conditions outside him, or from a perennial fount of joy within.

Joy is mentioned in Gal. v. 22 as a fruit of the Spirit. It cannot be gained by effort. The law of happiness is a well-known paradox; if we seek it, it flies, and it will only come when unsought. Christian joy can never be won by striving. It is a gift of the indwell-

ing Spirit, enjoyed sometimes under most unlikely circumstances—"having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost" (1 Thess. i. 6), "the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17). Here is found a boon which belongs to the present life, the only balm for a heart's bitterness, the only cure for a world's woes. That it is a visitor from another world, however, seems clear from the fact that even the Church has so little assimilated it. One characteristic feature of the earliest Christians was that they ate their bread "with gladness and simplicity of heart." The two words imply first, an exhilaration of spirit, when "the bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne," an exultation which lifts above the depression and dulness of ordinary life, and then an ease and smoothness of spiritual movement, an absence of inward friction, which is as rare as it is delightful. Clearly such a state must come spontaneously or not at all. Effort cannot secure a light heart, a clear conscience, a sunny outlook; it must come as an inwrought grace of an indwelling Spirit, and thus another Old Covenant ideal will be realized in New Covenant power—"the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Peace also must be deep-seated if it is to be real. It begins with "no condemnation," "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and as it deepens and grows it becomes the characteristic atmosphere of those who live by the Spirit—"to be spiritually minded is life and peace." The power inwardly to be still, to keep still, "central peace subsisting at the heart of outward agitation," to preserve a tranquillity which is not the inertia of feebleness, but the exertion of perfectly balanced energies, is clearly not amongst the elementary, but the very highest blessings of the

Gospel. Clearly also it is not attainable by effort. The reason of its absence from many Christian lives is that they know so little of the inward Comforter. The overmastering joy of the Man of Sorrows, the calm of Him who said, "My peace I give unto you, in this world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me ye have peace," cannot be understood except through the presence of that Comforter, who is another Christ in the heart.

These two words joy and peace furnish the *colour* of the Christian life. The prevailing hue of most lives—it cannot be called colour—is grey, well, if it be not drab. The clear skies out of which a wreath of light is continually transfiguring the whole landscape belong to more favourable climates than that of Great Britain. The deep glow of sunset, rich in purple, orange, crimson and amethystine hues that have no names, appears but seldom and is soon gone. In a sense this is to be expected of spiritual life in a naughty world. The moods of the soul are sure to change, and nothing is more monotonous or exhausting than the uninterrupted glare of a pitiless Eastern sun. But religious life that has no colour has lost the secret of beauty and charm, and perhaps there is no feature in the Christian religion that would do more to convince a weary, cynical *blasé* generation of the supernatural power of the grace of God than the fadeless colour it can infuse into a Christian life by the joy and peace which are a fruit of the Divine Spirit.

## V

Longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, trustfulness, meekness, self-control—so runs on St. Paul's list, a row of pearls in one gracious string. Closely akin are

the first three. *Μακροθυμία*, the patient endurance of injury inflicted and of protracted hardship nobly borne—*Χρηστότης*, the kindly disposition which prepares a man to meet his neighbour pleasantly more than half way, the readiness to help which is sometimes better than help itself—*ἀγαθωσύνη*, the active exercise of beneficence according to opportunity, the doing good unto all men made a habit of life—these three graces are three facets of one diamond. The fourth—which belongs to the same group—*πίστις*, was in the Authorized Version translated “faith,” in the Revised Version “faithfulness,” and it may seem bold to suggest that neither translation quite gives the meaning. That faith in Christ which is the foundation of Christian character would not be found in the middle of this list, and on the other hand it is questionable whether in the New Testament *πίστις* ever means fidelity to duty. Trustworthiness might seem nearer the mark, but in all probability *trustfulness* gives St. Paul’s meaning better than any other English word. It means the freedom from suspicion and grudging, the hoping always for the best in men, the finding good in all men and helping it to grow, which is proverbially an unworldly virtue. It condenses into a word the meaning of the clause “Love believeth all things,” and when the Church and the world have made this grace their own the new heavens and the new earth cannot be very far off.

It is often easiest to define by opposites. The unlovely counterparts of these four graces are (1) impatience, resentment that is never far below the surface and always ready to leap out on slightest provocation; (2) crabbed, cross-grained surliness of habit and demeanour; (3) selfish preoccupation with all that may tend to personal comfort and aggrandizement;

(4) suspicion, uncharitable construction, readiness to believe the worst of men, rejoicing not in the truth, but in iniquity. Love is the only cure for these evils, and only such love as the indwelling Spirit can bestow. For it is clear that the four fruits which grow here in one cluster are not natural endowments, not acquired habits, but Divine gifts. Some men have a measure of some of them by nature, other men may attain to a semblance of them by effort, but their real manifestation comes through grace. This is not to disparage natural virtues, which may often surpass the visible excellencies of many Christians. But the actual attainments of average Christians are not now in question. To be always strong, patient, gentle, kind, good and trustful in a world like ours is not "average" excellence at all; the character has only been perfectly illustrated once in history. But the Spirit brings fruit within reach of which all may taste and long for more.

As kindness and its congeners belong to a man's relation to others, so "meekness" and "temperance" refer chiefly to self. They illustrate two kinds of self-mastery. The English word "meekness" does no more justice to *πραΰτης* than "patience" does to *ὑπομονή*. The absence of self-seeking and self-assertion, the readiness to subordinate one's own interests, especially under injustice and provocation, is not the mark of a weakling. Military heroes have acknowledged that "greater is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." The power to capture and subdue the strong citadel of a masterful heart, the walls of pride and prejudice, the armoured ramparts of envy and jealousy, and keep them in assured subjection, requires strength which is all too rare. Moses, styled the model of "meekness," was not a milksop, but a mighty leader of men. One who could lead the rabble-rout of serfs

out of Egypt and make of them a nation is not to be confused with a spiritless creature who can hardly apologize sufficiently for his own existence and has not energy enough to claim his own just rights. Nietzsche is never weary of denouncing the abjectness of Christian virtues, but he does not see that his Superman is a bragging and blustering boy when set beside the man who has learned Paul's lessons of meekness and patience. To commend "pushfulness" is not necessary in the twentieth century, the quality is as common as it is unlovely. Paul learned his lesson of lowliness at the feet of a greater Moses, meekest of the children, and strongest and most stalwart of the sons of God.

The last word in St. Paul's list, *ἐγκράτεια*, implies self-restraint, especially as regards the use of the senses, the appetites and the desires. Its opposite is self-indulgence, the *luxuria* which figures among the seven deadly sins of the mediæval church, the self-pleasing of Rom. xv. 1, 2,—so contrary to the mind of Him who "pleased not Himself." It is easy to understand that those who in 2 Tim. iii. 2 are spoken of as "lovers of self" are at the same time "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God," and this because they are also "without self-control." Temperance in this noble sense may be found in poor, or rich, or in the comfortable middle-class folk who are glad that they have neither poverty nor riches. "He denied himself nothing that he craved, provided he could get it," is a description of a man who is assuredly preparing a hell for himself of unsatisfied desire.

"Who keeps no guard upon himself is slack,  
And rots to nothing at the next great thaw,"

says George Herbert. Spenser sings the prowess of

Sir Guion, and Holbein draws a picture of the Faithful Knight, who in every line of his figure, every muscle of his body, every detail of his mien and armour bespeaks the man that is fit to rule others because he can rule himself. Self-control comes last in St. Paul's list, not because it is least, or lowest, but because it is the bond of all the rest. Many men attain a good measure of self-control by effort, and none can gain the grace without effort, strenuous and constant. But he who would master himself completely and maintain his control to the end finds that this "temperance" is a gift of the Spirit. *Te sopra te corono e mitrio*— "Thee o'er thyself I crown and mitre," said Virgil to Dante, but only when he had triumphantly passed the seven terraces of Purgatory. Man need not wait till then for such high coronation, but the only man who can conquer himself is he in whom the Divine Spirit exercises complete control and sway.

## VI

"Against such there is no law." Is this an example of St. Paul's irony? The clause may be read as a supreme example of ironical speech. Rather perhaps it is added to show the Christian's true relation to law, the victory which the Spirit gains just because the law is not painfully toiled after, not punctiliously performed, but easily and supremely transcended. The Galatians, led astray by Judaizers, were being brought again into bondage by ceremonies and restrictions, and were fast losing the secret of Christian freedom. Law not only cannot condemn these fruits of the Spirit, it cannot produce anything of the kind, any more than a machine could fashion a lily.

History has pointed very sharply the lesson of this

contrast between law and grace. Stoicism in the early Roman Empire exhibited a lofty ethical standard, combined with poor and low achievement. It had no message for the multitude at all, and in the few it produced some noble traits of character, together with much that was lovely neither in the sight of gods or men. Roman austerity, settling into hardness; Greek cheerfulness, passing into levity and instability; Germanic honesty, combined with stolidity—such were some of the virtues recognized in the world of the first century A.D. Has Christendom proved its superiority over these heathen excellencies of character? Broadly speaking, yes. But perhaps in Christianity more than in any other religion is to be found the combination of lofty theory with scant realization; Christians more than most men exhibit a great chasm between creed and conduct, and the very nobility of their profession makes more marked and more inexcusable the unworthiness of their practice. If failure there has been in some ages, in some Churches, in far too many individuals, many ingenious explanations of it might be given. But the root-reason of all has generally been an attempt to secure by determination and effort traits of character which can only grow as the fruit of the indwelling, all-controlling, all purifying Spirit of God.



## SPIRITUAL FREEDOM

*“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”*—2 COR. iii. 17.

*“And His will is our peace; this is the sea  
To which is moving onward whatsoever  
It doth create, and all that nature makes.”*

—DANTE, *Paradiso*.

*“Love is watchful; and sleeping, slumbers not;  
Though weary, it is not tired; though hampered, it is not  
hampered;  
Though alarmed, it is not affrighted; but as a lively flame and  
burning torch it forces its way up and passes through.”*

—T. A. KEMPIS.

*“There is nothing evil, or the cause of evil, to either man or  
devil, but his own will; there is nothing good in itself but the  
will of God.”*—W. LAW.

## VI

### SPIRITUAL FREEDOM

THE Holy Spirit is the great Emancipator. The seven lamps of fire burning before the great white Throne, which are the seven spirits of God, symbolize that radiant, quenchless, seventy times sevenfold energy of His which without ceasing is at work over men, around them, and especially within them. Seven lamps, seven eyes, says Zechariah; so the Spirit searcheth, killeth, quickeneth all things.

For every need of man the Holy Spirit is not so much at hand with spiritual supply, as already providing it in anticipation. The Christian thinks of Him emphatically as the great Deliverer. Bondage, of one kind or another, is so common among men, true freedom so rare. The Christian has, indeed, left behind him the time when he passed through the struggle of Romans vii., "the good that I would I do not, the evil that I would not, that I practise." Through Christ he has risen above that level, seen the dawn of the sunshine described in viii. 1, "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," whom "the law of the spirit of life in Christ has made free from the law of sin and death." He has known what it is to be released from Egyptian bondage and started on his journey to the land of promise. But the wilderness lies between. If the whole truth were told, how many, after the first joys of pardon were over, have been disappointed with their enfranchise-

ment! The city of Destruction has been left behind, but the pilgrims' way to the City that hath foundations is not only long, but wearing. Still they toil and aspire and strive to attain, but are sorely hindered in the way, and the one thing they have not, as they expected to have, is freedom. Rousseau opened his *Contrat Social* with the famous words, "Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains." The Christian's inheritance is real and substantial, but to some it seems to be so encumbered with debts and mortgages that they fail to enjoy and to benefit by it. The name, the style, the title, the status of Christ's freed-men are all theirs, but only the Searcher of hearts knows how many worshippers in the Churches groan within themselves—waiting, striving, panting for a deliverance promised that never comes.

"Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven," says the hymn, "who like thee His praise should sing?" Base indeed would be the ingratitude of the slave who refused to sing the praise of Him who has brought him out of darkness into His marvellous light. But if He who struck off the fetters which pinioned the body would but strike off the chains from hands and feet! If He who opened the doors of the prison cell would also release from the first and the second ward and make the great iron gate that leads out to the city swing open on its hinges of its own accord, that the prisoner might go free indeed! It stands so in the charter and may be so in the life: for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

## I

Few words have been more abused than that of liberty. Madame Roland's often quoted exclamation,

“O Liberty, what crimes have been committed in thy name!” may really have run, as we are now told, “How thou hast been played with!” (*comment on t'a jouée!*). Both words are true. And even worse than playing fast and loose with a sacred name is that its very meaning is so continually misunderstood.

Often it implies absence of restraint from without, at the hands of some state or community, or of some lord or master, or in relation to certain regulations and restrictions. The civil and religious liberty for which men have had sometimes so long and so earnestly to contend means the removal of all unjust restraints upon citizens as regards their beliefs or actions. Many can think of no other “liberty” than this. The chains to which Rousseau referred were those of unrighteous laws, of injurious privilege, of proud oppression, or the artificial restraints of an iniquitously constituted social order, and he pleaded with enthusiastic rhetoric that these might be removed, and then the primeval reign of liberty would return. The men of the French Revolution of 1789 believed him, and shouted, “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,” only to find themselves under the dominion of a harder tyrant than ever.

Such freedom should never be undervalued. Its attainment is worth many a sore conflict, and those martyr souls deserve immortal honour who have lived and died to obtain it for their successors, if not for themselves. But when this liberty has been obtained, man has not yet begun to live. All just opportunity has been provided for each to think and act for himself, so far as state or society can provide it—no more. What will a man do with that “free hand” he has been so anxious to secure? Does he understand by

it liberty to do as he likes, provided he does no harm to others? Is it his chief desire to cast off authority as that which would cabin, crib, confine energies that crave fuller and unfettered exercise? The boy at school, the youth at college, the man in business, the woman in society, are apt to think, If I could but be free to do as I will, instead of being chafed and fretted by rules and customs and proprieties! If there were given to me the power of Emperor, Sultan or Czar, with such abundance of wealth and dignity as to be lifted above even the law of the land, with none to consult but my own will, I should be free indeed!

So many honestly believe this, and the opportunity to realize the idea so seldom comes, that men are not easily convinced of its untruth. Yet a small measure of human experience might have taught them better. If that principle be acted on in nursery, school or home, what comes of it? Children so brought up are not only a nuisance in the family, and avoided as spoiled children by friends outside, but they are miserable themselves, though they cannot understand why. Children of a larger growth might have learned that this path, the acquiring liberty merely by freedom from restraint, leads down a blind alley, marked "No thoroughfare," for the instructed spirit. Even if they enjoy unusual immunity from folly, mistake and wrongdoing, they say with Wordsworth, "Me this unchartered freedom tires." Or, as it has been colloquially phrased, "What is the use of being able to do exactly as you like, if you don't like it?" Ability to follow the impulse of the moment will not bring freedom or happiness for a single day, still less a course of true liberty and success through a lifetime.

## II

What man really wants in his craving for "liberty" is power; power for himself as a living creature with certain faculties to be himself—in thought, word and deed to work out his own nature without let or hindrance. Power to be himself, but what is himself? Each man has so many selves. It is sometimes said that in each is a higher and lower self, but if we think of the moods and changes, the varying conditions without and within, of one individual life, it is hard to say what the real self is. If full scope is given to lower impulses, what is to become of the higher? Hence arises an inner conflict, of which every son of man knows something, and the best know most. When Racine read his play of "Esther" to Louis Quatorze, and came to the passage which describes *la guerre cruelle*, the cruel civil war between higher and lower natures within the soul, the Grand Monarque interrupted him, "I know that war very well." Epictetus, the crippled slave, stood in an upper form of the school of humanity in which kings and sages have often proved themselves dunces and dullards.

To realize the highest Self—if this were but as easy as men have dreamed! "We needs must love the highest when we see it," but we soon find how impossible it is to make it our own. It is not a question of law and authority, or their absence; not a question of the indulgence of tastes and impulses. That man alone is truly free who has the power to realize all the best and highest capacities of his nature. The Self is not formed yet, only forming, and freedom means the power to form it in noblest and most

generous fashion. The only thing that matters for every man in this life is that he should be what he was intended to be. But who is to tell him what that is, still more how to reach it?

One word has thus far been obviously and intentionally omitted—God. It is because He is left out of the calculation that so many in their search for happiness, and others in their endeavours after self-realization, utterly fail. Direct attempts to secure these high ends always fail. The only way to secure happiness is not to strive after it for its own sake, but to take the course that leads to it, the path where it will always come in by the way. The only way to secure true realization of Self is not to concentrate thought upon self in attaining the great ends of being. God, who is Spirit, has created spirits in His own image, and we are so made that true self-realization is possible only through harmony with Him who has made us and the Order of which He is the centre and the goal.

The first step towards freedom lies, therefore, in reconciliation with God on the part of one who has hitherto lived for self. The removal of the load imposed by an unworthy and evil past; the rolling away of the burden of guilt for offences against a righteous and gracious God; the taking away of the garment of shame for culpable failures and errors; relief from the impotence caused by long enslavement to evil habit—this is the beginning of a freedom which man desires and cannot of himself secure. He that committeth sin is the bondslave of sin, said Christ, and emancipation, except through Him, the Son who makes free indeed, is beyond man's reach.

So much the Christian learns at the outset. Who shall deliver me from this body of death? I thank

God through Jesus Christ our Lord. He has learned, moreover, that only in and through the Holy Spirit can Christ's work on man's behalf be appropriated and assimilated. The truth of the Gospel is made known, the message uttered and reiterated, it may be with eloquent lips, but it is of no avail till the Holy Spirit brings it home to the heart and enables the penitent believer to make it his own. Thus it is *that* moment which makes the epoch in a life, as the soul, in the old-fashioned phraseology, "finds peace," or "finds Christ," or "enters into liberty." Henry Ward Beecher describes in a passage of autobiography "that blessed morning in May when I found out that it is God's nature to love man in his sin for the purpose of helping him out of it, as my mother loved me when I was in trouble that she might help me out of it. Then I found God." Nothing else matters in a soul's history compared with this, and every one who has passed through the experience knows that it is the work of the Holy Spirit. For where He is, He brings liberty from guilt and fear, from doubt and shame, from the law of sin and death and all its hateful bondage.

### III

The pity is that the brightness of the morning fades away so soon. However it may be in natural life, in the life spiritual "Heaven lies about us in our infancy," and the youth, who "by the vision splendid is on his way attended," too often ere manhood comes finds it "fade into the light of common day." The infant Church found it so when Pentecostal joys were over. The religion of the average member of the Christian Church to-day is far removed from the simple, child-

like glee, the spontaneous activities, the unfettered exercise of powers in sheer hilarious delight, of those who ate their bread in gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. Compared with much in modern Christendom, Acts ii. 46 reads like a satire. Modern religion is largely formal and conventional, or anxious and perturbed; it implies the continual asking of questions, pondering of problems, contending with difficulties, toiling in duties, the being harassed by temptations, till it would seem as if the pith and core of religion had resolved itself into husk and shell, its inner fragrance lost in the over-cultivation of the wood and leaves, or at best of the petals of the flower. Bushnell gave to his sermon on "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love," the title, "The Problem of Christian Experience"—holding that it may well be the aim of a lifetime to maintain the freshness and power of the first rapture of Christian experience undimmed and undiminished till the end.

When the early liberty of the enfranchised soul is in danger of being lost, is not one reason that men lose the keen sense that they are not under the law, but under grace? Having begun in the Spirit, they would fain be perfected in the flesh. At the moment of first forgiveness it was the astonishing and overwhelming sense of undeserved grace that transformed the whole landscape. Later on, the message of grace may seem too good to be true. The fact is, it is too good not to be true, because it is God in Christ with whom we are dealing, God the Spirit who brings into liberty. Law brings into bondage, love delivers. Law restrains, prescribes, prohibits; love spurns hindrances, prompts, impels, renews, exhilarates; one

animating and dominating energy gives the secret of all glad effort to those who are freed from law and constrained by grace. Such servants of God are sons indeed; they do not toil in walking but fly straight to their mark like the eagles and the angels. "The lover flies, runs and rejoices," says Thomas à Kempis; "he is freed and cannot be held. Love feels no burden: counts no pains, exerts itself beyond its strength; talks not of impossibility, for it thinks all things possible and all permitted."

St. Paul, in 2 Cor. iii., contrasts two dispensations: the one of law, of the letter, of condemnation, of death; the other of grace, of the Spirit, of justification, of life. Who could hesitate in his choice? Yet the Jews and Judaizing Christians were rejecting love to cling to law, and the explanation is given that a veil was upon their heart, as a veil hung before the face of Moses. When they should turn to the Lord the veil would be taken away. A veil is over every heart as regards the message of the Gospel, a black, heavy pall, darkening the sky and overshadowing the life, unless the Holy Spirit remove it. As we read elsewhere, the mind of the flesh is death, the mind of the Spirit is life and peace. What is meant by "to mind" in this connection? St. Paul means to care for, attend to, be interested in and strive after, mainly and chiefly. A thousand things may be cared for in their place, but what has the chief place? A thousand things may be interesting by the way, but what constitutes the great End? Omnipotence itself cannot compel a man to enjoy that which he refuses to care for and strive after. The help which the great Deliverer effects is given to those who place themselves in His hands and let Him work His own gracious will—especially His work of bringing home the meaning of Christ's work.

“Neither passion nor pride  
Thy cross can abide,  
But melt in the fountain that streams from Thy side.”

Law is not abrogated nor abolished, but abundantly transcended, when the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord does its work. “Love and do as you like,” the doctrine propounded by Luther, sounds dangerous enough, and the maxim has often been shamefully abused. But it is the safest of all doctrines, the only abidingly safe doctrine, provided the love is pure and supreme. He who loves is free. Then shall I run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt set my heart at liberty.

#### IV

All this is not inconsistent with a considerable measure of conflict, else the doctrine would miss its hold of actual life. So far from being inconsistent, it is in and through conflict that liberty is reached, that power is realized, developed, increased. It is in conflict that the lessons of love are learned, the meaning of love understood, the capacities of love unfolded, applied, multiplied. Conflict may be sharp and painful, and yet welcomed because of its results; conflict becomes joy when enemies are base and triumph is assured. Temptation itself, like unbelief, may be

“Kept quiet like the snake 'neath Michael's foot,  
Who stands calm, just because he feels it writhe.”

But it is well to face the facts. A man who walks by the Spirit is not freed entirely from the tremendous power of past habits. Partly hereditary influences, partly his own past actions, their effects perhaps ingrained through years, a pressure of circumstances

from without which he cannot control, may entail a bondage of a deadly sort, quite opposed to the spontaneity and joy of life in the Spirit.

A man who walks by the Spirit is not freed entirely from the conflict of desires, recognized in Gal. v. 17—a verse which contains a graphic description of many a Christian life. The desires of the flesh are not necessarily sensuous, though some of them probably are. They are desires of human nature, left to itself and outside God—a constant current setting in against the Spirit, as the Spirit of God, working through the spirit of man, counteracts these desires, condemns and would fain annihilate them—so that in either case the Christian does not, and cannot do, what he would accomplish if there were no inner conflict. Some desires are from the body, some affect the intellect, all disturb the feelings and tend to warp the will—spiritual wanderings, vagrant affections, strange, subtle, poisonous airs which it is fatal to breathe long. It is said that they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. That is true as regards resolve and purpose, more and more resolute determination, but life is not over yet, and as long as it lasts the "motions of sins," sinful, passionate movements, are found stirring within, often when least expected.

Self is the long, low, ugly taproot out of which nearly all these Upas-leaves spring. Desires that are harmless, or even laudable, change their character when perverted by self-love. Relations with others remain pure and sweet till self sours or embitters them, changing friendly regard and healthy emulation into envy, jealousy, hatred and all uncharitableness. Self creeps into churches and changes worship into idolatry, drawing its slimy streak over sermons, hymns,

church work and philanthropic effort, till religion itself becomes odious instead of attractive. Many temptations come from without, but the chief cause of conflict is within, in the unmastered self-will, seeking its own ends, or what are called God's ends, by its own means.

One single false strain in the character may be of itself sufficient to bring into bondage the whole of an otherwise emancipated life. It is possible to be held to earth by only one band. It may sound hard when St. James says, "If a man keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." But put it another way: how if one course of disobedience be enough to show the hidden mischief that is at work and bring all the rest of the life to ruin? One quivering tongue of flame is enough to show that the house is on fire. One spot of tubercle in the lung frightens the physician and the patient. One crack in the wall of the reservoir may let loose a flood that will sweep away whole villages in its train. Lancelot, so noble and chivalrous, fell by one fault, all that was pure and good in him clinging

"Round that one sin, until the wholesome flower  
And poisonous, grew together, each to each,  
Not to be plucked asunder."

And when all the facts of our difficult life are taken into account, it might seem as if spiritual freedom were impossible.

## V

Liberty is attainable only through the Holy Spirit. As many as are led by the Spirit are not under the law. So it comes to pass in the course of Christian experience, as at its happy beginning, a Breath comes

from above which we can hear, but not see, and does its own work of enfranchisement in the struggling soul. The breath of our own spirit is not nearer or surer, but with an infinite energy which mocks our puny endeavours the Divine Power lifts, wafts, bears the spirit on and up, far beyond the regions of conflicting desire and the cramping fetters of inveterate self-love. Sinful movements and stirrings may be present, but they are not felt, or their paltry feebleness is scorned. In Wesley's phrase, sin may remain, but it does not reign, and in the presence of the Spirit it will have hard work to remain—

“Give me Thy strength, O God of power,  
Then let winds blow, or thunders roar,  
Thy faithful witness will I be;  
'Tis fixed—I can do all through Thee.”

If these things are so, it might be asked, why should a Christian ever be defeated in spiritual conflict? With such resources at their disposal, why are good men overcome so often and so easily, why are not all free indeed? Is there some deception in a description of this kind, where all seems so easy, while the practice remains so hard and triumph is still so distant? The answer is that there is no question concerning the amplitude of spiritual resource, but Christians fail to realize their privileges. Of what use is it that all provision is made for a great campaign—ammunition, arms, accoutrements, down to the last button on the soldiers' uniform—all the plans of a Von Moltke skilfully elaborated, so that it is clear that the enemy has been outwitted, outnumbered, out-generalled, if all the time the rank and file of the army are discouraged, supine, inert, or half sympathize with the enemy? “If we live by the Spirit,” runs the timely apostolic

counsel, "by the Spirit also let us walk." Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has set you free: stand fast first, and then go forward. So victory shall be realized here and now in a bloodless war, and perfect triumph be reached at last—

"The ultimate, angels' law  
Indulging every instinct of the soul  
There where law, life, joy, impulse are one thing."

## PRAYER IN THE SPIRIT

*“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity.”*—ROM. viii. 26.

*“Nor prayer is made on earth alone;  
The Holy Spirit pleads;  
And Jesus on the eternal throne  
For sinners intercedes.”*

—JAS. MONTGOMERY.

*“Nothing but Infinite Pity is sufficient for the infinite pathos of human life.”*—J. H. SHORTHOUSE.

*“Lord, we are rivers running to Thy sea,  
Our waves and ripples all derived from Thee;  
A nothing we should have, a nothing be  
Except for Thee.  
Sweet are the waters of Thy shoreless sea,  
Make sweet our waters that make haste to Thee;  
Pour in Thy sweetness that ourselves may be  
Sweetness to Thee.”*

—CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

## VII

### PRAYER IN THE SPIRIT

REAL prayer is the deepest act of the human soul. The mere saying of prayers has more meaning than is often assigned to it: it is at least an acknowledgment before God, before men and the suppliant's own heart, that it is a rational and necessary thing to pray. But to say one's prayers is separated from true prayer by a practically infinite gulf, and never does the human soul find itself at so great a depth as when thus engaged. It would seem then that earnest prayer must be a man's own act, and that if it be not this, it is worthless. Yet it is one of the paradoxes of religion, at least of the Christian religion, that a man is most himself when he rightly loses himself, and the same is true of prayer. How can it be true that my own deepest supplication is not mine, but that of the Holy Spirit in me? To answer this question is to master one of the central truths concerning the Indwelling Spirit, and it claims separate attention.

#### I

Prayer is used in a narrower and a wider sense—as petition, the asking of definite blessings from God, and as communion, including all intercourse with God on man's side. It is always well that the former should be merged in the latter. True prayer includes

adoration, the reverent contemplation of what God is—praise, the triumphant recognition of God's glory—thanksgiving, the acknowledgment of all blessings directly bestowed—confession, the humble recognition of what he who prays has been and is in the sight of God—and many other elements besides direct supplication for oneself and intercession for others.

But throughout all the personal element must prevail. My prayer must be *my* adoration, *my* thanksgiving, my own tribute, just as every angel—and there are no two angels alike, no two even of the same species, says Dante—and every child of man, is called on to contribute his own characteristic note to the great diapason of worship. When Gabriel praised God in place of Theocrite, the angel would not serve in place of the boy, and He who sat on the throne said, "I miss my little human praise." For His ear a whole chorus of creation does not suffice; He detects—and mourns—if any single voice be silent.

If it be said that the hymn of the congregation is not the same as bowing the knee and can hardly be called true prayer, the answer is that in devotion, praise and petition can hardly be separated. Be brief in supplication, said an ancient saint, that you may be the longer in praise. But the soul in communion with God passes imperceptibly from one to the other, and there are moods, not infrequent, when a man knows not whether he is glorifying God for what He is, thanking Him for what He has given, or longing and pleading for more in the present and the future. Whatever mood predominate, however, the whole strength of the soul should be thrown into the act of prayer, if its true significance is to be realized and its great end attained. One main reason why so much asking from God is futile is the lack of this essential

element—the petitioner's whole force is not put forth to wrestle with the Angel of Life and gain the mastery. It is not so easy a thing to *mean* all that is said in prayer. In human intercourse it is rare to find sincerity such that the speakers never say what they do not mean and always mean all they say. But in speaking to God, where sincerity is most important and insincerity most futile, a large amount of unreality prevails. Lack of success in active life is more frequently due to deficient will-power than to any other cause. In prayer it might seem as if the human will ought to be dormant. On the other hand, here it is most of all needed. Not man's will as opposed to God's will, but whatever energy of character is possessed must be put forth in prayer, and here it is most of all required, provided it be of the right kind and rightly used.

For true prayer is a demand, and the energy with which the demand is made is the measure of success. True, the claim of the suppliant is put forward under definite conditions, or it is condemned as presumption. But it is not a common fault to put too much strength into petition, unless indeed it be in asking for those material blessings in regard to which we are least sure that they are according to God's will or really good for ourselves. The utmost power of the whole nature put into the quest for the highest ends—that is the only secret of success in public life and in private prayer. "Gird up the loins of your minds" is an exhortation much needed by those who would hope perfectly and those who would ask effectually. The "sin of each frustrate ghost" remains still the unlit lamp of eager desire and the ungirt loin of resolute endeavour. The sleepless watching in steadfast and unwearied persistence, which is implied in

the Greek words used in Eph. vi. 18, is only an echo of our Lord's exhortations to importunity in prayer. Why should men be urged to ask and seek and knock, if the door is already open and the King on the throne is more willing to give than the humble petitioner is to proffer his request? What is there lovely or admirable in the friend who disturbs a family at midnight, or the widow whose tiresome pertinacity breaks down the callousness of a selfish and unrighteous judge? Why should men be urged not to "faint"—literally become exhausted and spiritless—in prayer, except that this is the chief danger man has to guard against and the commonest cause of failure? If ever the whole man is needed, the putting forth of heart, mind, soul and strength, it must be when the highest is to be attained through making urgent and irresistible demands upon God, who is indeed defined as a liberal Giver, but who does not give in response to a languid plea, because it proves that the asker is unable to receive and use the boon. A man with a nutshell of a heart may ask for an ocean of love, not knowing what he says, or that a shellful would drown him. "More things are *wrought* by prayer than this world dreams of"—the italics are not in the poem, but the word needs to be made emphatic. Prayer is, or ought to be, work. The supplication of a righteous man is exceeding strong in its working, says St. James. That is, if he puts his strength into it. For if he who is to enjoy the blessing does not throw *himself* into the effort to secure it, who can help him?

## II

It is just here that Christian teaching comes in, as it is wont to do, at the moment of man's uttermost

need. Christ takes each man as he is, not as he ought to be, and thus only can he become what he ought to be. There are few commoner complaints, even among good people, than that of inability to pray. It may be the utter inability of a man who does not care, though he knows he ought to care; more frequently it is the partial inability of one who does not care enough. What a blessed thing it is to be really hungry is only known to those who have been obliged to turn away from food in the nausea of satiety. One of God's earliest and greatest blessings to His children is to make them want so keenly that they will perish, rather than fail to obtain. That is the kind of hunger for righteousness which always ends in being filled. And that gift, like every other perfect boon, comes from the indwelling Spirit.

Salvation, says St. Paul in Rom. viii. 24—and we may read the words with a certain surprise—is always a matter of expectation, it comes by way of hope, rather than of attainment. However far a man has advanced in this road, there is always so much more to come that his attitude is continually that of *ἀποκαραδοκία*, the outstretching of head and neck in eager anticipation. Those who already have “the firstfruits of the Spirit” know that it is only first-fruits and they “groan” for full deliverance, as nature groans and travails for complete realization, deliverance from that measure of purposelessness to which creation is still subjected. Nature longs, Christians long, but neither knows exactly why, or for what; and man, like nature, is largely inarticulate in his yearnings, unable to translate them into the earth-and-heaven-shaking petitions that will bring about their own fulfilment. It is as if the Christian, in the person of St. Paul, put forth as his chief need the

very power to understand his own needs, the power to express them in fitting words and then urge his petition with all his power on an unreluctant God, so that his life of prayer should be a life of perpetual conquest and attainment.

Thus also does the indwelling Spirit long and yearn. If a difficult passage in St. James has come down to us in its right form, "the Spirit which dwelleth within us longs and yearns for us, even unto jealous envying." As alas! there are few feelings among men that have so keen an edge as unworthy jealousy over others' good, so no expression can be stronger than that the Spirit of God jealously yearns for our advancement. And therefore it is that He "helps" us in our weakness—literally, takes firm hold at the side, or over against, so as to support us and joins His might with our feebleness. What greater help could be given than that of One who will do this, not from without but from within, at the very fount and spring of our nature, strengthening us rightly to desire and ask. For we do not know what we ought to pray for, nor how we ought to pray for it—both statements are true, and either is a permissible translation of the Greek. For how can form and matter be separated in prayer? Sometimes it is the very substance of the petition that is lacking, sometimes its appropriate expression. But when fit expression fails, the deficiency is generally due to lack of knowledge. The inarticulate longings which are so common at prayer-time are but another form of the vague restlessness of the sick child, who wants many things, but most of all an understanding of that which would still all his craving. Yet he cannot ask, for he cannot speak; and if he tries to make signs, he can only be understood by the sympathy of the mother or the nurse

who understands him better than he understands himself.

Fit language may well be lacking when we think of what prayer means. Man cannot pray as he ought, if the Omniscience of God is considered, for there can be no concealment from Him. He cannot pray as he ought, if the real relation between God and man is considered, including man's entire dependence on God, yet power to secure from God according to His gracious covenant. He cannot pray as he ought, if his own actual feelings were adequately expressed, still more if those needs were recognized which are so much more important than his feelings at the moment. Nor can he pray as he ought, if he is successfully to plead with the kind of prayer that cannot but prevail. Yet if a man cannot do these things for himself, what a helpless babe he must be—requiring to be fed, but not knowing what food will suit him !

Therefore the Spirit "makes intercession." He *ἐπειπούχαρει*—goes out to meet the helpless creature for the purposes of intercourse and consultation, then intervenes by taking up his cause and pleading on his behalf—it is the work of a true Paraclete. The Son of God is such an Advocate on high. We can hear Him pray for both inner and outer circles of His disciples in John xvii., and now that He has entered upon the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, we can imagine, and trust to, His yet more efficacious High-priestly work on our behalf yonder. But He is far away, and the wings of faith and imagination are weak and often fail us. What is needed is a Helper within, one who not so much prays for us, as prays in us. If men had invented such a phrase for themselves it would be laughed at

as an impossibility, or rejected as blasphemy; surely a man must do his own praying to the God who is over him. But a characteristic feature of Christianity is the oneness of the God over us with the God in us, and the Spirit Himself undertakes our cause with yearnings that can find no words. At first no words are forthcoming, afterwards they may be poured forth abundantly. But whether this is so or not, whether the words are articulate but insufficient, or inarticulate and therefore ill understood, He who is over all knows the meaning of what He has Himself inspired and his half-instructed child has made his own. It is the very will of God that needs interpreting; this is communicated by the Holy Spirit and assimilated by the saint in his weakness and struggles for expression. When prayer is thus offered, the great Hearer knows, and understands—and answers.

### III

Is this the work of man, or of the Spirit of God? Both. In the combination of the Divine and the human lies the power and significance of Christian experience. It is a description of a whole Christian life when St. Paul bids men work out their own salvation with tremulous earnestness, but with all confidence, because it is God who works in them to will and to work. When God Himself works in man to will and to pray, shall not prayer succeed?

At the opening of the Christian life the cry of the newborn child is *Abba, Father*. Whose is the cry? It would appear that there can be only one answer, "*We cry*" (Rom. viii. 15). But another answer is given in Gal. iv. 6, "*He has sent forth the Spirit of His Son to enter your hearts and cry, Abba, our*

Father!" The co-witnessing of the Holy Spirit and the human spirit begins at the outset of the Christian life, and never ceases till the end. To be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inward man is necessary for the realization of privilege, for growth in grace, for victory over temptation, and not less for successful and effectual prayer. "Praying in the Spirit with all perseverance" is the expression used in Eph. vi. 18; "praying in the Holy Spirit" is the phrase found in Jude 20. Or are we rather to understand that the Holy Spirit is praying in us? These two can no more be opposed than our Lord's "Abide in me and I in you": each implies the other. The branch draws strength from the Vine, the Vine pours strength into the branch; the branch cannot exist apart from the Vine, the Vine finds its own realization of itself, not in the short bare stock or stem, but in the spreading branches, the luxuriant leaves and especially the abundant fruit. If the Holy Spirit is as the atmosphere which the Christian breathes, we pray in the Spirit; if He be the inspirer who stimulates to prayer and sustains us in it, He prays in and through us.

The fact is that no illustration, especially no impersonal illustration, suffices here. The closely uniting affections of the best beloved afford the nearest line of approach to an understanding of what can never be expressed in words; but human spirits at best are mutually exclusive, however closely they may be entwined in tenderest regard. The I and Thou remain and must remain. Though the bar be broken 'twixt life and life, "one near one is too far." Love may conjoin in human relationships, but it cannot identify. It is the marvel of the union between God and man that a closer than any human relation is possible with Him, though still there is no fusion, no absorption.

The error of the mystic and of the dreaming East generally must be avoided, if the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit is to be rightly understood. He who is the Root and Ground of our being works in us to will, without interference with our own willing; He who is the very Inspiration of our life yearns in us to pray, without overruling or overriding our own prayer. It is His, yet ours; ours, because His in us. The mother teaches the child to pray, and at first the prayer is the mother's alone, but the child learns to join, while prompted and sustained by the mother's prayer. He who prays in the Spirit finds himself in perfect harmony with the music of the spheres, and He that searcheth the hearts hears the echo of the lowliest human harp and the vibration of its chords under the sway of the Spirit, who pleads in and for the saints according to the will of God.

So when, in the very closing words of the New Testament, the Church longingly cries, "Come, Lord Jesus!" the prayer is that of the Bride eager for the Bridegroom. But it is the Spirit and the Bride, the Spirit in the Bride who calls, else the yearning is not intense enough and the cry is not penetrating enough. May it not be said that the modern Church is not found intensely longing for the coming of her Lord, after the fashion of Rev. xxii. 17, 20, because she, rather than the Spirit in her, is looking for the great consummation? What the individual needs for growth in grace, what the Christian Church as a whole needs more than anything else for the realization of the coming kingdom, is prayer in the Spirit.

## IV

But what can such prayer do? How do petitions thus offered differ from the cry of the child left to himself? Access "in the Spirit," words "not which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual"—what are these?

Self-knowledge is gained, or increased—an immense help in prayer. The difficulties of introspection are great. Every psychologist recognizes them, even when he is searching by the cold, dry light of intellect and no feelings are concerned. But the difficulties are greater when emotions are aroused and their fumes and vapours, their shimmering lights and shadows, obscure the vision. To such an extent is this the case that little confidence is given to a man who is able to observe and analyze his own affections. The process becomes more difficult still when evil and wrong come in to darken the sky, the foul smoke of base desires obscures and baffles altogether the vision of the watcher in the spiritual observatory. The power of keen discrimination is lost, and with it the power to assign values, to approve and to condemn. Man needs a higher power than his own to show him what sin means, what God means, truly to feel sin as it ought to be felt in the presence of God. A higher power than his own is needed to prompt him to that full confession which offenders are proverbially slow to render. It is the last and sorest stab of the surgeon's knife that brings relief, and it is the contrite recognition of ultimate sinfulness as a part of the very self which brings the joy of pardon. This contrition a man cannot gain by himself, yet it is of

supremest spiritual value. True repentance must precede forgiveness, yet how can a man repent without the Holy Spirit? Probably no adequate repentance is possible on this side of the grave, but the nearest approach to it comes after long experience of the life of sonship. Then the disciple, having learned more and more of the mind of Christ, can see evil as it really is, and the light of the Spirit enables him to know himself in a fashion which makes all the analysis of a Socrates and all the research of an experimental psychologist to seem as mere child's play.

Prayer in the Spirit opens up the blessings and privileges of the Gospel as otherwise they could never be seen. Even after these centuries of Christian experience men are slow to believe in grace. Law they know, order they know; justice, punishment, revenge, apathy, neglect and scorn; but kindness undeserved, unexpected, unrestrained, even to the unlovable and ungrateful, is so unusual in human and earthly relations that when it does appear it brings unwonted tears to the eyes. That such grace, unmerited and free, is the very mind and heart of God, is a truth not so easy to believe, or, when believed, to understand and appreciate. Therefore it is not superfluous to pray that the eyes of the heart may be enlightened, that Christians may know what is the hope of their calling and what the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints. The history of the Church, no less than of the individual, shows how much of the unsearchable riches of wisdom and knowledge in Christ are as yet hidden. And there are no moments of insight into these treasures like those when it is found possible to pray in the Spirit.

Other features of this inward revelation can only be lightly touched. (1) It quickens spiritual desires, the

sense of deficiency deepening in proportion as the knowledge of privileges and possibilities heightens. So does perpetually recurring keen appetite make possible the repeated enjoyment and assimilation of more food. (2) It develops new ideas and a true conception of the right methods of realizing them. As the inquirer who is always occupied with practical problems concerning mechanical ends and the best means of attaining them—locomotion, water-supply, road-making, traction and construction—has quick perceptions of how things may best be done, and leaps to conclusions that would never have suggested themselves to the untrained eye, so the human spirit that occupies itself in prayer with the great practical problems of the spiritual life sees them in a fuller and clearer light and goes forth from the inner chamber ready for wise and prompt action. (3) It enlarges the sympathies, which means partly an enlargement of ideas, partly of the feelings which these ought to inspire. An illustration of this is ready to hand in the admission of the Gentiles into the primitive Church. It was a "mystery" hardly to be credited that Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, fellow-members of the body, fellow-partakers of the promise with the Jews. "Away with such a fellow from the earth; it is not fit that he should live," was the cry which greeted the preacher of the Gospel of Christ when he uttered the word "Gentiles." It is so easy to see the folly of the prejudices of other men, of other countries and other centuries, so hard to pierce through the blinding mists of our own. If there be one thing more certain than another with regard to the Church of Christ in the twentieth century, it is that it is the will of God that race-prejudice and international jealousy and strife should be broken down and done away. It

remains to be seen how far the eyes of the Church are enlightened to perceive this and act upon it, and it is quite certain that if the Church is to be lifted above the level of its natural vision and enabled to see beyond the party-walls which circumscribe its sympathies and activities, it must be by its yielding more fully to the guidance of the indwelling Spirit.

In a word, only such prayer can adequately preserve the ideal element in Church life, the thought and the hope of an illimitable future. The gift of the Spirit is *ἀπαρχή*, *ἀπαβάν*—the firstfruits of what a harvest, the earnest of what a possession! The possibilities of the Christian calling are unexpressed, inexpressible. "All things"—no word can promise more—"all things are yours," if ye are Christ's as Christ is God's; and the Holy Spirit is the power of God working within men the capacity to inherit all things. How thin and poor are most human petitions in comparison with the prospects thus opening up in never-ending vistas of hope. It remains that Christians learn more fully to pray in the Spirit—

"Breaking the narrow prayers that may  
Befit our narrow hearts, away  
In His broad, loving will."

## THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS

*“Called to be saints.”*—ROM. i. 7; 1 COR. i. 2.

*“That habitual disposition of soul which in the sacred writings is termed holiness; and which directly implies the being cleansed from sin, from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit; and by consequence, the being endued with those virtues which were in Christ Jesus; the being so renewed in the image of our mind as to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.”*  
—JOHN WESLEY.

*“Teach me Thy love to know;  
That this new light, which now I see  
May both the work and Workman show;  
Then by a sunbeam I will climb to Thee.”*

—GEO. HERBERT.

*“If God had wished to make of the creature merely an impersonal plaything, not an object of His love, then undoubtedly it need not have passed through the discipline of evil.”*—ROTHE,  
Stille Stunden.

*“But he who would be born again indeed  
Must wake his soul unnumbered times a day,  
And urge himself to life with holy greed;  
Now ope his bosom to the Wind’s free play,  
And now with patience forceful, hard, lie still,  
Submiss and ready to the making Will,  
Athirst and empty for God’s Breath to fill.”*

—G. MACDONALD.

## VIII

### THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS

THE characteristic name of the Spirit in the New Testament is Holy. His characteristic work is that of sanctification, making holy the Church of Christ. The characteristic title of those who belong to that Church is saints, holy ones. It is, therefore, above all things necessary that Christians should understand what is meant by that word and in what sense it is applicable in actual life to the followers of Christ to-day.

#### I

The meaning of the word "holy" in the Old Testament bears closely on the subject, because from the Old Covenant both the word and the idea were derived. It is of no use to search in classical Greek for the meaning of *ἅγιος*, when amongst the Greeks the very idea of the quality was lacking, and if the thought had been preserved, it would have been repudiated as an ideal in life. The conception came from Israel, to whom so many nations have had to go to school for lessons in religion. And in that specially chosen people the idea of holiness dawned but gradually, only by a slow and difficult process was the nation taught the full meaning of the words they had been accustomed to employ.

It has been more or less customary among scholars

to derive the Hebrew word *Qadosh* from a root meaning "separate, apart," and to apply this meaning to the word from the first. Thus God was esteemed holy because of His ethical uniqueness, His utter aloofness from all evil; whilst men and places and objects were esteemed holy because they were set apart and consecrated to His service. Considerable doubt, however, attaches to the etymology, and usage hardly bears out this line of exposition. It is usual now to understand that "holy" was originally practically synonymous with divine, that among Semites generally it meant that which belonged to the gods, with no particular quality attaching to the word which would cover the whole ground. Dr. Davidson says in his *Introduction to Ezekiel* (p. xxxix.) that "the term was so far appropriated to the divine that when coupled with the word 'god' or 'gods' it became a mere otiose epithet, 'the holy gods' meaning nothing more than 'the gods' (Dan. iv. 8, 9, etc.)." And in his *Theology of the Old Testament*, whilst stating that the early history of the name is very obscure and one on which diverse views have prevailed, he points out that among Phoenicians, for example, the term holy is "a mere *epitheton ornans*, having no force," and that in its original use among the Jews, "when applied either to God or to men, it does not express a moral quality" (p. 145). Even so, however, an emphasis is laid on the transcendent majesty and glory which set Jehovah as the true God above all men and all heathen divinities; and similarly men, places, times and objects are viewed as set apart and inviolable, because appropriated to the service or worship of the One Divine Being. Hence "holy" is opposed to "common" or "profane," not necessarily as implying evil or unworthiness of any kind, but rather the

absence of any restriction which would "hallow" for specially religious purposes.

It may be true that in the earlier stages of Hebrew history the character of the God thus honoured and adored was not prominent in the thoughts of the people; the modern view is that it was to the earlier writing prophets that Israel owed the full apprehension of this thought. It is more probable that the ethical idea of Jehovah was present in the religion, but not sufficiently emphasized, and that Hosea, Amos and the rest recalled the people to its importance and necessity.<sup>1</sup> In some representations the righteousness of God in the moral government of men predominated, especially the fact that He visits the wicked with condign punishment. The refrain of Ps. xcvi., "Holy is He," certainly carried with it this connotation. Isaiah had pointed the same lesson long before—"Jahweh of hosts shows his greatness by judgment"—*i. e.* just decisions and apportionment in human affairs—"and the holy God proves Himself holy by righteousness" (v. 16). A higher sense still is found in Hab. i. 13, where the intrinsic purity of God is described as such that He cannot bear the very presence of evil; and in Isa. vi. the deep sense of uncleanness attaching to the prophet and the people round him makes him, though devoted to God's service, to be unworthy of bearing His message or carrying out His will. Dr. Skinner, in *Hastings' Bible Dictionary*, says that the word holy "never appears detached from the underlying thought of majesty and power," but unquestionably the ethical and spiritual associations of the word are brought so far to the front in the later writings of the Old Testament, that the idea of moral uniqueness, flawless and

<sup>1</sup> See Robertson, *Early Religion of Israel*, Chapter V.

ineffable purity came to prevail as the distinctive attribute of the God of Israel.

Consequently the idea of holiness among men was purified also, and a new meaning attached to the command, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." The lesson was a hard one to learn; only after generations of training, repeated punishments for sin, and continually reiterated warnings and promises through prophetic messengers, was Israel taught how rightly to fill out the concept of "holiness" as the consummation of the Divine attributes. The nation came to regard a holy God as including the idea of a righteous God, together with as much deeper meaning in addition as the word holiness transcends righteousness in its modern acceptation.

In Greek, the word *ἅγιος* corresponds to the Old Testament "holy" at its highest, and is then correspondingly raised and purified by the superior spirituality of the later dispensation. The adjective is freely used in the New Testament, and fills a place of its own. It is to be distinguished from *ἱερός* (sacred), which denotes an external relation to God; from *ἅγιος* (pious), which points to the one observance of religious rites and all reverent and godly habits of life; from *σεμνός*, which means all that deserves reverence, all true dignity of character, commanding respect, or even veneration; from *ἄγνοια*, pure, chaste, free from carnal sins; from *δικαῖος*, the name of the just man, who righteously fulfils the relationships of earthly life; from *καθαρός*, *i. e.* first ceremonially, then morally, clean; and from some other words of high and honourable significance. As Dr. Stevens well expresses it, "Aγιος (holy) is more positive, more comprehensive, more elevated, more purely ethical and spiritual. It is characteristically Godlikeness, and in the Christian

system Godlikeness signifies completeness of life." Sometimes in history a raised ethical standard has given rise to higher conceptions of God, sometimes higher views of God have raised the standard of human relations. In Christianity the latter has been the course of thought. The perfect life of Christ, His revelation of the love of the Father, and the atmosphere of Divine grace substituted for that of righteous law, gave new meaning to old words till they became new ones—*ἅγιος* among them.

The family of words grouped around this stem deserves more attention than can here be given to it. The verb "to sanctify" and the three associated nouns indicating respectively the process, the quality and the state of holiness should be pondered for other than etymological and expository purposes. An echo of Isa. vi. is found in Rev. iv. 8, with added meaning—"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty"; and Christ, in His mediatorial prayer, addresses not only the "righteous," but the "holy" Father (John xvii. 11, 25). He Himself was the Holy Son and Servant, in perfect harmony with the Father's will of righteous goodness, discerned by His disciples to be "the Holy One of God." So marked and characteristic did the name become that "Holy Spirit" is the normal expression for God at work among men, having for His main object the manifestation of the highest conceivable spiritual excellence and the transformation of men into His adorable likeness.

## II

The phrase, "spirit of holiness," which stands as the title of this study has been variously understood. It occurs once only in the New Testament, viz. in Rom.

i. 4, where Christ is said to have been “declared the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness.” The interpretation of this phrase directly of the Holy Spirit is hardly tenable. St. Paul says that as Christ on the side of His human flesh was of the seed of David, so was He marked out as the Son of God in the most potent and impressive way by the Resurrection, in accordance with the operation of the (human) spirit which inhabited that flesh, one distinguished by holiness as its specific and unique possession. That this human spirit was fitted and equipped for its work by the Divine Spirit is undoubtedly stated, or implied, in many passages, but does not come into full view here. The phrase would seem, however, to imply that it was the whole object of Christ to impart the “spirit of holiness” to men in and through the presence of His holy and sanctifying Spirit.

If we are guided by the New Testament, the whole Christian life is one process of “sanctification.” It is to be regretted that this word has for many modern ears a formal sound and not altogether attractive associations. The term “saint” needs to be redeemed and rehabilitated. It forms, in the apostolic salutations to the earliest Churches, a definition of a Christian. It describes what the believers in Rome or Corinth were by way of status and privilege; it sets forth what they ought to be, what every one of them in Christ might be. It does not mean that they were wholly righteous in the sense of fully discharging all their duties; it does not point to an essential goodness and kindness of disposition, nor to their character as believers in Christ and faithful in their allegiance to Him; but it does describe an ideal which they were to make real. Briefly stated it is this. Every member of the Church

is *ἅγιος* (holy or a saint), in the sense that, having been redeemed by Christ and brought into a new relation with God in Christ by faith, his whole inner character has been changed; he is a consecrated man, living a dedicated life. His whole life is maintained by trust and love; he is being made like Him to whom he owes his natural and his regenerated being, renewed not only in external relations and actions, but in thought, purpose and aim, so that he follows the example of Christ and reflects the image of God. These men are "called to be saints," more exactly, "saints by way of calling"; that is, are designated by God for a high purpose which it is their privilege to carry out, called with a high calling of which they are trying to walk worthily.

St. Paul's earliest Epistles show how vital this truth was in his teaching. He says to the Thessalonians, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification"; "God chose you from the beginning in sanctification of the Spirit." No more central passage to describe the scope and nature of the Christian life is to be found than the paragraph Rom. vi. 16-23, in which the one aim is to present to God the whole self, "your members as servants to righteousness," so as to secure the one end, "sanctification." The Christian is a man free from sin, a servant to God who has his "fruit unto sanctification and the end eternal life." It is God who sanctifies, yet men are to sanctify themselves; the work is Divine, but it cannot be accomplished without human co-operation. St. John presses the same thought home continually under his characteristic phraseology concerning life, light and love. No better synonyms for holiness can be found than these three cardinal words. God is light, and the Christian must walk in light if he is to have fellowship with the

Father and the Son by the Spirit. The whole of Christianity is summed up in the suggestive phrase in which our Lord describes His own life and that of His followers, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth."

The point of view in the Epistle to the Hebrews is somewhat different, but the meaning is the same. "They that are sanctified" is a standing expression which contemplates primarily a worshipping people, fitted by God under the new covenant to stand in near relation to Himself, moving, as it were, in His presence, priests in His temple, consecrated to His service in all things. This great work has been accomplished by Christ in His sacrifice offered once for all. "He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified"—in other words, the Saviour and the saved—are all of one; Christ is made like to His brethren that His brethren may be made like to Him. He and they are alike Sons of God. By one offering He is Himself perfected as a Saviour and has perfectly accomplished the work necessary to bring men into right relation with God under the new covenant. It is not ethical perfection of character that is prominent before this writer's mind, but a certain relation to God in Christ; for if this be rightly attained all the rest will follow. But for the author of "Hebrews," as for all other New Testament writers, God's training of His people has for its end that they should be "made partakers of His holiness," and the aim and object of daily pursuit is to attain peace and the "sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord."

## III

It is no part of our present object to trace the history of the word "saint" and the idea of sainthood from New Testament times onwards. The history, however, is a very instructive one, and some knowledge of it is necessary if the ideas of the New Testament are to be made available for the guidance of to-day.

There were strikingly various types of *ἅγιοι* in Apostolic days. Peter, John, Stephen, Paul, James, Barnabas—more diverse types and temperaments could hardly be imagined. Alexandria, Jerusalem, Ephesus, Rome—for what various forms of Christian devotion these names stood in the structure of the early Church! The fickle Galatians, the warm-hearted Philippians, the gifted and eloquent but factious and undisciplined Corinthians, the eager and unstable Thessalonians—Churches formed from among these elements were all followers of Christ, all elect and faithful, but no two were precisely alike, or received the stamp of saintship in precisely the same fashion. Seven Churches are addressed in the Roman province of Asia by the Lord speaking through the mouth of the seer; but, though quite contiguous and formed from the same material, they receive each its own markedly distinctive message, which could not be transferred to another. It is doubtful whether in creed, government or worship the Churches of the New Testament preserved the same uniform model, as moderns understand uniformity, but theirs was one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one calling to be "saints," with one glorious hope to crown it at the last.

The conditions of Christian service during the Apostolic period were not long maintained. As the years and the centuries passed, the definition of "saint," rendered into the language of succeeding generations, changed its form very often. Rules were laid down by the Church for the ordering of life, and the saint was the man who kept them most assiduously. The influence of the world came to prevail within, as well as outside, the Christian communities, and the saint was the man who withdrew from Church and world alike to worship God in the desert. Time came—and it has not yet passed—when "the religious" were those, and those only, who made and kept the monastic vows of poverty, obedience and chastity—the last word meaning, of course, celibacy. At length canonization was reduced to a science, and the roll of saints in the Church of Rome came to be regulated by a complicated process, which might well be surrounded by elaborate safeguards, for those who pass through it are "elevated to the altars" and commended to the perpetual veneration and invocation of pious Roman Catholics in all lands. In Roman hagiology there are three degrees of sanctity—known by the names of Venerable, Blessed and Saint. Benedict XIV laid it down that for canonization, a servant of God must have practised virtues in an eminent and heroic degree, and it must be proved that at least two miracles have been wrought through the intercession of the "Blessed" one since beatification. The Church of Rome has frequently put forth the challenge as one test of a true Church of Christ, Does it produce saints? The challenge is a fair one, and may well be accepted by those outside her pale, provided that first a satisfactory definition of a true saint be agreed upon.

It would not be difficult to show that the interpreta-

tion of the word "holy" throughout the history of Christendom has been affected by many influences from outside Christendom, since the time when Oriental asceticism made St. Simeon Stylites to be a pattern of uttermost devotion. The Puritan promoted, as he thought, saintliness of life by "precision" of dress and demeanour, by secularizing Christmas Day, and keeping "the Sabbath" with a more than Judaic rigidity. Many types of Christians through the centuries have disregarded the warnings of St. Paul denouncing as doctrines of demons those who should come "forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth." The "things which have a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility and severity to the body, but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh" have appeared and reappeared in the Church. And even to-day, according to the reading of history which commends itself to some, the periods of special sanctity have been precisely those in which these beggarly "rudiments of the world" have been most prevalent in the Church.

But it is easier to criticize than to construct. Periods of reformation are supposed to inaugurate moral and spiritual improvement, and it happens that each of the last four centuries has made its own characteristic contribution to the meaning of true holiness. Let us take the eighteenth and nineteenth, marked respectively by the Evangelical and the Tractarian Revival movement. Christians of all types may agree without much difficulty that John Wesley and John Henry Newman were saints of the great Church Catholic, and that each in his own fashion set about the tremendous task of reviving true holiness in the Church and the

nation. Each furnished definitions from time to time of what he understood the holiness of the New Testament to mean and how it was to be resuscitated in his own day. It is instructive to consider the witness of each of these eminent religious leaders, and it will be convenient to take Newman in his pre-Catholic days first, because he illustrates the type of sanctity which Wesley professed to seek in his earlier life and afterwards discarded as mistaken and insufficient.

Newman points out in his description of the Spiritual Mind that the religion of the New Testament "is a very different mode of obedience from any which natural reason and conscience tell us of—different, not in its nature, but in its excellence and peculiarity—much more than honesty, justice and temperance." After dwelling upon the fundamentals of Christianity, he goes on to say—"We must have a deep sense of our guilt and of the difficulty of securing heaven; we must live as in Christ's presence, daily pleading His cross and passion, thinking of His holy commandments, imitating His sinless pattern, and depending on the gracious aids of His Spirit; that we may really and truly be servants of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, in whose name we were baptized. Further, we must, for His sake, aim at a noble and unusual strictness of life, perfecting holiness in His fear, destroying our sins, mastering our whole soul and bringing it into captivity to His law, denying ourselves lawful things in order to do Him service, exercising a profound humility and an unbounded, never-failing love, giving away much of our substance in religious and charitable works, and discountenancing and shunning irreligious men. *This is to be a Christian*; a gift easily described and in a few words, but attainable only with fear and much trembling:

promised indeed, and in a measure accorded at once to every one who asks for it, but not secured till after many years, and never in this life fully realized.”<sup>1</sup>

Wesley, in his Oxford days and down to 1738, would probably have accepted as his own this view of the Christian life as “one attainable only with fear,” but “not till after many years,” and “never in this life to be fully realized.” He says later that from these his earlier sentiments and zeal for the Church “I bless God He has now delivered me.” Further, in describing Methodism, he pleads that it is not a new religion, but the old religion, the religion of the Bible and of the primitive Church. It is “no other than love, the love of God and of all mankind; the loving God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength, as having first loved us—as the fountain of all the good we have received and of all we ever hope to enjoy; and the loving every soul which God hath made, every man on earth as our own soul. . . . This religion of love and joy and peace has its seat in the inmost soul; but is ever showing itself by its fruits, continually springing up, not only in all innocence—for love worketh no ill to his neighbour—but likewise in every kind of beneficence—spreading virtue and happiness to all around it.”<sup>2</sup> From some standpoints they do not so greatly differ, these two great saints of God, whose lives covered between them practically the whole of two centuries and whose works live after them. And yet they do differ essentially, as the religion of fear and trembling differs from the religion of faith working by love. Christians can never dispense with the spirit of lowly fear, but they are

<sup>1</sup> *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, Vol. I, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> “Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion.” See *Works*, Vol. VII, p. 423.

never Christians indeed till perfect love has cast out fear.

Sainthood undoubtedly means the life of the ordinary Christian perfected. It differs from the ordinary, not in kind, but in degree. M. Joly, in his *Psychology of the Saints*, goes further than this. "Great men and little, we are all of us formed out of the same clay and the same spirit is breathed into each one of us. . . . The saint, though he is a man of God, is still a man, and a man who has under the influence of grace developed and raised himself not alone in the direction of the supernatural and eternity. . . . When the interior heart is filled with the spirit of Christ, exterior action flows from it as from its true source, and sometimes in one direction, sometimes in another, fertilizes the field of this world's activities, for the benefit of mankind. . . . The Church has not only canonized monks, side by side with dukes, duchesses, kings, queens, emperors and empresses, but also merchants, school-masters, gardeners, workmen, shepherds and shepherdesses, lawyers, doctors, publicans, a retired public executioner, jailors, treasurers, magistrates, beggars, domestic servants, artisans, shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths and fishermen!" Signs are not wanting that a larger and richer catholicity than that of Roman Catholicism may mark the course of the twentieth century, and that "saints of the marts and busy streets, saints of the squalid lanes," are taking their place with "saints of the cloistered Middle Age and saints of the modern home," so that not in mere theory, but in actual life, it may be always borne in mind that there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all.

## IV

The point, however, which it is desired in this place especially to emphasize is that a more complete recognition is desirable of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit as Himself the great Agent in all true processes of sanctification. Attention has too often been concentrated upon methods and results, rather than upon the true source and essence of holiness. Nothing but the personal recognition of the Spirit's personal work will suffice to preserve men from formalism, asceticism and the many dangers that beset them when they set about the work of sanctifying themselves.

The work of the Spirit on the heart in sanctification is twofold. Negatively, He purifies from evil; positively, He fills with purest thoughts and hallows to highest service. Neither in contending against temptation nor in consecration to God can strenuous effort on the part of the will be dispensed with, but in neither work is it sufficient. For one thing, the very sense of effort interferes with the steady flow of pure thought and feeling; holiness as a state is attained when effort is no longer needed. The soul is freed from purgatory when the ascent of the steep, heaven-pointing hill is as easy as its descent. Another reason why only the Spirit can purify is that the most subtle forms of evil escape even the Christian's notice without the gift of Divine eyesight. Another frequent cause of failure on the part of a man who is only striving to purify himself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, instead of looking to the Holy Spirit to direct and crown his endeavours, is the attempt to secure a spiritual end by the adoption of habits, the multiplication of rules and the observance of external standards, excellent in themselves, but useful only as means in a

subordinate sense. Only Divine inspiration can so cleanse the thoughts of the heart that men may, in the time-honoured phrase, "perfectly love God and worthily magnify His holy name."

It is the beauty of holiness that is lacking in the most elaborate and comparatively successful efforts of men. "Do you not wish you were a Christian?" said a sour-visaged Church member to Tom Hood. "If it means to feel as you look—no," was the answer of the humorist, who was at the same time a moralist and a true Christian. When Milton described "how awful goodness is and virtue in her shape how lovely," he joined together the two qualities which impress the idea of saintliness on the world. All that wins and charms combined with all that commands veneration—the two qualities are often contrasted, but they blend easily together in the life of one whose heart has learned the secret of Christ. This serene summit of experience can only be attained by the indwelling of the Spirit, who at the same time softens the hardness and asperity of a self-occupied nature, and raises to a dignity and sublimity of its own all that is narrow and unworthy in a mean nature. "There is no remedy for a bad heart and no substitute for a good one," wrote J. C. Morison; and if there be no Holy Spirit, it can hardly be denied that his words are true. No artificial fashioning of a laboriously purified character can impart the spontaneity, grace and beauty of a holy one. Holiness is not virtue, nor an assemblage of virtues, but a new spirit breathed into a man, and therefore easily and naturally breathed forth from him. And this Spirit comes only from above and dwells only in the humble and contrite heart.

Complaints abound of the Church's "worldliness" in these latter days, and the evil complained of is

recognized as a very serious and very subtle one. But the chief difficulty in dealing with it is to detect its inmost essence. Card-playing and theatre-going are not its only marks; worldliness knows well how to wear the semblance of sanctity, and it has often clothed itself with ecclesiastical zeal as with a cloak. Worldliness in a Church is not easily expelled, and some methods of driving out the evil spirit have ended in the introduction of seven others, worse than the first. It is at least important that the Church should know what worldliness means, and this may show the way to its cure. Wiser words on the subject have seldom been written than those which lay on Dr. R. W. Dale's desk when he died—the last words he ever wrote, broken off in the middle of a sentence. “Unworldliness does not consist in the most rigid and conscientious observance of any external rules of conduct, but in the spirit and temper, and in the habit of living, created by the vision of God, *by constant fellowship with Him*, by a personal and vivid experience of the greatness of the Christian redemption, by the settled purpose to do the will of God always, in all things, at all costs, and by the power of the great hope—the full assurance—that after our mortal years are spent, there is a larger, fuller, richer life in—” The great preacher, whose hand was thus arrested by death, has inherited now that larger and fuller life, in the hope of which the Church militant toils and struggles in the midst of an evil world. But those who study the above weighty definition carefully will find the pith and core of it in one of its middle clauses, which we have underlined. The only secret for holiness of heart and life is found in the closing words of the Apostolic benediction—“May the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you always!”



THE TIDES OF THE SPIRIT

*“He giveth not the Spirit by measure.”*—JOHN iii. 34.

*“God is not dumb that He should speak no more;  
If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness  
And findest not Sinai, 'tis thy soul is poor.”*

—J. R. LOWELL.

*“For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,  
Seem here no painful inch to gain,  
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,  
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.”*

—A. H. CLOUGH.

*“One accent of the Holy Ghost  
This heedless world hath never lost.”*

—EMERSON.

*“Whatever God is in Himself, His manifestations to us do not lie still before us in the sleep of a frozen sea; they break out of this motionless eternity, they sweep in mighty tides of nature and of history . . . and have the changing voice of many waters.”*—JAS. MARTINEAU.

## IX

### THE TIDES OF THE SPIRIT

IN a noble sermon with the above title Dr. Martineau comments on the fact that "Jesus, as His custom was, went into the synagogue on the sabbath day," vindicating what he calls the "Christian habit of seasonal and local worship," finding in "the occasionalism of piety, not its shame, but its distinctive glory." The intermittency of devout affections, he adds, is a sign, not of poverty or weakness, but of their intrinsic grandeur and "their accurate accordance with what is highest in God's realities." In one of the apt metaphors which are characteristic of Dr. Martineau's style, he says, "God has so arranged the chronometry of our spirits that there shall be thousands of silent moments between the striking hours."

If the thought be once admitted, it seems desirable, or even necessary, to follow it further. The mystic seeks to raise all moods to the level of the highest, and always to live in the very Holy of holies. The worldly man distrusts the very attitude of contemplative dreaming, and finds a level path by immersing himself in business and pleasure and leaving the element of worship out of his life. If both of these are wrong for different reasons, some kind of tidal action must be traced in the workings of the Spirit. Twice in twenty-four hours there may be high and low water; spring-tides and neap-tides are marked as the months go round; now the wind drives the rising waves shoreward, now, blowing backward from the

land, it retards their progress. The wind itself who can measure and predict? Yet mutable and unfettered as are the air-currents, science is reducing some of them to order. Trade-winds and monsoons blow steadily, in winter from the north-east, during half the year from the south-west, bringing welcome rains. Study of the movements of the earth, of the action of high mountain ranges, of the different temperature of continents, of the currents that pass from land to sea, from sea to land, has taught many lessons of regularity where men have hitherto found only caprice.

When the Divine breath of morning moves, no man can tell whence it comes, or whither it goes; the Holy Spirit quickens where and as He lists. But surely none will say that His movements are without order or meaning? Law is traced in physics, in biology, in psychology, varying in character with phenomena, but order of some kind is discernible throughout nature. It is less easy to discern and calculate as the scale of being rises, least of all is it to be readily traced in the complex history of man. But nowhere are principles of order lacking, and reverent search delights to trace them in the workings of the spirit of man as well as of his mind and body. That they are no less present in the relations between the Divine and the human spirit may well be accepted by faith, and it may be said that it is increasingly becoming matter of knowledge. Nothing but good can come from reverent inquiry into the order and methods of working of the Spirit of God among men, if we keep clear of the danger of setting bounds to the Divine grace and the foolish pride of supposing that our feeble generalizations are more than tentative guesses at the methods of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

## I

In individual life we are compelled to recognize periodicity. Day and night, summer and winter, youth and age, sickness and health, constitute successive conditions of human existence. None can evade or ignore them, and spiritual life is in its own way affected by them. Epochs occur in every life—when physiological processes are completed or when mental development culminates; there are periods when moral habits become fixed, or when a new start is made and new stages of the journey are undertaken. Spirit has its history, as well as mind and body, though it is not confined within the same limits, nor subject to the same forces. It is impossible to draw an artificial line between judgment, conscience, imagination, faith; and if in some of these regions what may be called tidal movements are recognizable, this implies no interference with spiritual freedom, but it does show that laws of spiritual growth are discernible in the midst of a complex and often quite inexplicable history.

Changing moods—what forms a more fruitful theme of moralizing than the rapid, startling, unaccountable succession of these in every life? Some are directly attributable to more or less obscure physical conditions. The “unstable” nervous temperament forms a recognizable type, yet even instability has its own laws and conditions which the physician at least partly understands. The influence of the crowd on the individual, of the individual on the crowd, the incidence of panic and the control of its storms, the swaying of gusts of passion, the rise of waves of enthusiasm—are all these to be marked merely as paroxysms forming irreducible exceptions to a regular observable order? No student of human nature supposes for a moment that they

are merely disorderly, arbitrary or unaccountable, though their occurrence raises questions more than can be accounted for in his philosophy. All that may be known concerning them is unquestionably of importance in a study of the workings of the Spirit of God upon human life, whether in the individual, the community, the nation or the race.

Special attention has been given of late years to the phenomena of adolescence. The results of study as given by Professor Stanley Hall and others are most instructive in their bearing upon the whole life, and not least the life of religion. Professor William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* is one of the best-known contributions to a fruitful field of study, and it gives the sanction of an eminent name to a mode of treatment which a generation ago would have been considered beneath the dignity, or beyond the sphere, of science. The psychology of religion has advanced rapidly within the last two decades. Religious instincts are now recognized as part of the essential furniture of human nature, their development and manifestation are better understood, and an inductive study of the phenomena of religious experience has opened up a new field in which already ordered paths are beginning to be made.

Dr. Starbuck, an American scholar who is largely quoted by William James, says in one of his books, "Conversion belongs almost exclusively to the years between ten and twenty-five—it is a distinctively adolescent phenomenon."<sup>1</sup> To some the statement may sound absurd, others might call it profane. But if we modify its epigrammatic form by saying that experience shows that a radical, abiding change of religious nature rarely occurs before twelve years of

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology of Religion*, p. 28.

age, is most frequent from the fourteenth to the twentieth year, that it is rare after the age of thirty, and that "if conversion has not occurred before twenty the chances are small that it will ever be experienced," we are moving in a region of undoubted facts which most people can confirm, and which bear an important moral lesson. Narrow down the inquiry still further, and it will be found that the years just before and after sixteen are in many respects crucial. Tables of statistics are usually misleading, and in a subject like this they are useful only within very narrow limits. Dr. Starbuck's curves and squares are not diagrams in a proposition of Euclid. Some of his phraseology jars upon the reader. Instead of saying with him, "We may safely lay it down as a law," it would be better to say that some investigation tends to show that in women "there are two tidal waves of religious awakening at about thirteen and sixteen, followed by a less significant period at eighteen; while among the males the great wave is at about sixteen, preceded by a wavelet at twelve, and followed by a surging-up at eighteen or nineteen."<sup>1</sup> And it would be more appropriate to say that the normal period for a deep and radical spiritual change in man lies somewhere between the innocence of childhood and the fixed habits of maturity, whilst the nature is still impressible and preserves a certain capacity for spiritual insight which, if then unused, tends in later life to diminish and disappear.

The objections which arise to what may seem to be a determination of religion by statistics are obvious, but they do not apply to an inquiry carefully conducted. It is of course true that tables of averages form no guide to individual cases. Of course it is also true that no such careful observations in human

<sup>1</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 34.

psychology fetter the operations of the Spirit of God. It may also be admitted that in one sense these figures contain nothing new; that every one knew long ago that childhood and youth form the plastic period during which all impressions ought to be made that are intended to be deep and lifelong. The objection is raised from another quarter that it is a dangerous thing to make the processes of mind dependent upon physiological processes, and to attempt to connect the highest thoughts and aspirations of the human spirit with the natural stages of puberty.

It spite of all objections it remains true that the careful study of childhood and youth made by experts like Professor Stanley Hall has not only been of the highest value in education, but that it has an important bearing on religion. It is not scientific to make mental processes dependent on bodily functions, or to resolve the spiritual side of man's nature into the physical. But that the two are connected is certain, and it is pure gain to know as much as we may about the working of both that the relation between them may be more clearly understood. Adolescence is a crisis in the history of the human organism which has many aspects and bearings, intellectual and moral and æsthetic, as well as physical; why should it be supposed that the spiritual nature is entirely unaffected? Conversion is not a matter of chronology, but all that affects the history and growth of a man concerns those who are chiefly interested in his highest development, and it especially concerns the religious teacher to understand all that may be known of the mutual action and reaction of body, mind and spirit, thought, feeling and will.

Especially may help thus be gained to understand some of the tidal movements in the life of religion.

The Spirit of God is always brooding over the world of human spirits, drawing, striving, seeking—most of all when mind and heart are most susceptible. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of these facts for parents, teachers, pastors and all who have young life in their charge, that certain tides of life should be rightly caught and used and carried up to high-water mark in the formation of noble characters and useful lives.

But adolescence is only one phase of one period. Some events in life form landmarks—marriage, the birth of children, sickness, bereavement, figure in the lives of all, and none of them leave us just as they found us. The most important epochs cannot be named and timed. Periods of doubt, of deep disturbance of faith; periods of enlargement of outlook and sympathy; periods when the mental and moral strength is rapidly and mightily knitted and developed; periods of the advent of power in character—who can define these, or describe when they came and how they pass? Yet they are as real as the passage of callow youth into mature manhood, and some of them are much more significant. If these had been more carefully studied, more would have been learned concerning the tidal movements of mental and spiritual life. It is enough for the moment to say that all changes, great and small, subtle and patent, are great opportunities; that the Divine Spirit will use them if human spirits are awake to their significance. It may or may not be correct to render the obscure words found in Ps. lv. 19: "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God," but it is matter of common experience that God is most easily forgotten in a regular, unbroken round of prosperous, comfortable existence. The wine that settles on its lees

and is not emptied from vessel to vessel preserves its original taste and flavour unweakened. This process may sometimes be useful for producing a fine vintage, but in man or nation it is usually no commendation to say that "his taste remaineth in him and his scent is not changed." However unwelcome the process, straining is necessary, and the refining produced by pouring from jar to jar, but the stage is a critical one and needs skilful handling.

Changes in human life are not chance occurrences, but whether they are blessings or curses depends on the use made of them. The Divine Spirit is always at hand to make them minister to growth and advancement; intermittent epochs are to be expected in His training of individual human nature, subject as it necessarily is to the law of periods. If the sails of the boat are set to catch the propitious breeze when it blows, all is well; but it may sigh idly through unprepared rigging and pass unused away. It is significant that in the well-worn quotation from Shakspere the part which describes the "tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood," is so familiar, while the latter part—

"Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries,"

which is the more frequently illustrated in fact, should be by general consent forgotten. The loss of opportunities can only be remedied by the quickening Spirit of God, who can bind all winds and times and tides in humble ministration, to bring the vessel to her desired haven.

## II

The sacred words "Ye are a temple of God, and the Holy Ghost dwelleth in you" are true both of the

individual and the community. But in both cases the gracious inhabiting described is a dynamic, not a static, condition ; it implies the ever fresh incoming of a new energy, and no man can say by what steps it will proceed, or what will be its history, course and issues. As the principle of periodicity is discernible in the growth and development of the individual, so assuredly has it been present in the history of the community. But to trace its operation is no light task.

Pentecost was a great event. The records in the Acts are so scanty that we cannot study its significance and its sequels in detail. But the narrative makes it clear that in a short period there was a change in the disciples of Christ corresponding to the change called "conversion" in the individual, and that they were endued with the power of the Spirit in a very special sense. What has been the subsequent history of the Church? It cannot be described as mere degeneration, it has certainly not been one of uninterrupted progress. What we actually find is a chequered history full of life, fascination, advance alternating with failure and disappointment. The ministry of charismatic gifts made way for the ministry of appointed officers. As the age of persecutions passed away, the Church developed her regular order, her ecclesiastical codes, her more or less elaborate ritual. The process may be described as one of consolidation, and without such organization probably the Church could not have survived; but it brought its own dangers and difficulties with it. Ere long a protest became necessary against the growing ecclesiasticism and the substitution of form for substance, of letter for spirit, which is always the peril of prosperity. Montanism was anything but a satisfactory protest,

and in any case it was ineffectual. The slowly developed history of the primitive, the mediæval and the modern Church is full of suggestion as to the actual workings of the Spirit of God in Christian communities. It exhibits neither unbroken progress nor steady decadence, but progress on the whole, though in unexpected ways. The advance is that of the incoming tide, with flux and reflux of individual waves and periods of apparent stagnation. Or it may be more fitly compared to a spiral curve, which winds round and round to almost the same point again, yet is marked by a real, though very gradual, rise upwards. It is perhaps truer still to say that the curves of progress have hardly any distinguishable law to determine them, but that they do possess a significance which the lapse of centuries is slowly making more and more intelligible. The working of the Spirit in the Church is in any case a "tidal" movement.

If it be, we cannot be surprised. Such periodicity is manifest wherever life exists, and in human history similar phenomena attend the progress of civilization and the rise and decay of nations. Intellectual advance is marked by intermittent dark ages, with bright gleams preparing for the dawn of brighter days. Moral progress is discernible, but society after each new advance sinks back, if not to its previous level, still exhibiting a measure of decadence in comparison with a recent zenith of attainment. If the history of religion is marked by similar phenomena, it is but what might be expected as we watch the Divine Spirit at work with frail and mutable human material. And if we ask at one stage, Why this mighty quickening? the answer is that God's Spirit has been energetically at work. And if again, Why not steady advance under such Divine dynamic? the

answer is, Because the human material takes the Divine impress imperfectly, or retains it feebly, or generations rapidly succeeding one another prevent the gain in moral and spiritual power from being permanent. Such is the description briefly given by St. John of the period from the Creation to the Incarnation. The light shines in the midst of darkness, he tells us in the first chapter of his gospel, the darkness cannot wholly overcome it, but neither does the light wholly banish the gloom, which seems alternately to gather and recede, though gradually its dusky veil is being withdrawn before the dawn of victorious day.

The very phrase "religious movement" is suggestive. The word "revival" speaks for itself of a life which seems continually to need renewing. Christ came to earth at His first Advent, He will return to earth a second time for judgment, but how often does He "come" to His people meanwhile? The Holy Spirit was "poured out" on the day of Pentecost; there have been many "visitations" of the Spirit since, and will be many more until the consummation of the ages. But why should these be isolated, with long weary intervals? Why, as Jeremiah pleaded, should "the hope of Israel be as a sojourner in the land, as a wayfaring man that turns aside to tarry for a night?" The answer is returned for the modern Church, as for the ancient congregation, that the Lord's arm is not shortened, not His ear heavy, nor His love wavering and uncertain, but that His people's sin and unfaithfulness prevent Him from granting what they ask, but are not in a condition to receive. The worst evil of all in the history of Church and nation is when the prophet has to declare in the name of God who is ready to give waters in the wilderness and rivers in

the desert, "thou hast been weary of me, O Israel." Plethora brings surfeit—

"A lamp's death when, replete with oil, it chokes;  
A stomach's when, surcharged with food, it starves."

Abundance of religious knowledge and privilege and grace, when unused or abused, brings a state of darkness and deadness beyond all others dangerous. Hence the sharp messages to some of the seven churches, Repent and do the first works, or I will take thy candlestick out of its place. The capacity of the Church to receive is the measure of God's ability to bestow at the moment. Only when the times were ripe could Christ come as a babe born in Bethlehem; only in the fulness of the times can He come a second time in glory at the consummation of the ages; surely the periods between, as the seasons are ripening, are similarly ruled and ordered? It becomes then imperative to ask, How much is being done meanwhile by way of hastening the period of spiritual harvest? Here lies the great problem of the Church in every age.

### III

Can anything like a law of periodicity be discerned in the history of the Churches? What are some of the signs and causes of the alternating advance and retrogression of Christ's kingdom in the earth? To give a few hints as to observed sequences is all that is possible here. Even to attempt so much within the compass of a few pages may well seem bold and futile. But a glance along the line of history shows some such successive pictures as these.

(1) The growth and advance of a church brings prosperity, creates the need of careful construction

in order to conserve the increase realized. Then follows a not unnatural dependence on external order and machinery; formalism sets in, with a corresponding diminution of spiritual energy and deterioration of spiritual character.

(2) The environment of the world is always present, and is most powerfully felt, not in times of persecution, but when the world is most favourably inclined towards the Church. Prosperity increases the numbers of the Church and lowers the level of earnestness and devotion. Spiritual energy begins to fail at the source; there is not power enough to work the elaborate machinery.

(3) A period of languor follows, of lukewarmness in spiritual affections, of comparative apathy concerning the highest things. The Church holds its own for a while in status and numbers, but progress is arrested. No decadence is very markedly visible, but life is perishing within; regiments are not being renewed, and the army is sinking into a mere force on paper.

(4) But if the Church have any life at all, there will be many who cannot bear that this state of things should continue. The first sign of real change is the dawn of a spirit of deep contrition and humility. The Church's best friends are those who frankly face the facts and fearlessly point out the mischief. They may be called prophets of evil, but like Jeremiah during the captivity, like "Mr. Recorder" in Bunyan's town of Mansoul, the unpopular preacher is the messenger of life.

(5) There follows secret and importunate prayer on the part of the faithful few. The story of Malachi iii. is repeated, and they that fear the Lord speak often one to another. In a local church the whole turn of

the tide has been traced before now to one poor invalid, or humble Christian in a garret—the “quiet in the land,” who from the time of the Psalmist onwards have proved themselves to be the salt of the earth. In religion, at all events, it has been shown again and again that “progress is not from above, but from below.” A return to first principles follows, and that means the germ of new life. Secretly the contagion of goodness spreads, and the ground is being made ready for new seed.

(6) At this stage possibly a great leader may arise. It is difficult to exaggerate the value of a great personality. Augustine, Bernard, Savonarola, Luther, Loyola, Knox, Wesley, Newman, are but specimens of names emblazoned in history, whilst a crowd of undistinguished but faithful men have been as influential in their own places for keeping the torch alight and passing it on unextinguished to the next generation.

(7) Often there has followed the formation of a Church within a Church. In order to leaven the whole mass, a morsel of leaven must be concentrated to do its work. Such was the moving principle in monasticism at the beginning; such the real significance of the societies of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Reformers before the Reformation, Beguines and Beghards, the Brethren of the Common Lot, the Brethren of the Free Spirit. Such were the Mendicant Friars at their first institution, though the ideals of Francis and Dominic had begun to fade and die down almost before their own lives were ended. Such were the Society of Friends in the seventeenth century, the Covenanters in Scotland, the Camisards in France, the Methodists in England before the time when they began to spread over the whole world. In

these movements some new doctrines may have been broached, more usually new power has been infused into old beliefs. St. Paul has been re-discovered in every great revival of Christianity; again and again the watchword "Back to Christ!" has been sounded. If only men had rightly understood to what Christ they were professing to return!

(8) Then, after crowds have gathered; after interest has been awakened, a large ingathering secured; after enthusiasm has been aroused and the public mind been stirred, too often an inexplicable change has come. The rising flame has been checked and hindered and begun to die down, first zeal has not proved lasting, a falling away begins, and men exclaim, sometimes with a sigh, sometimes with ill-concealed delight, that another religious movement has spent its strength and run its course. Much may have been gained meanwhile. Drunkenness has passed into sobriety; a general reformation of habits has taken place; generous contributions have proved the genuineness of inward renewal; envy, jealousy and slander have given way before the spirit of mutual forgiveness and tenderness; all are prepared to acknowledge that a mighty power for good has been at work. But declension follows revival, and the hearts of good men are made sad, as if God had forgotten His people and the Spirit of grace had taken His departure.

#### IV

But this current interpretation of history is not adequate. Nothing is more remarkable in the history of the Christian religion than its vitality in the midst of serious, and, it might have been thought, fatal,

corruptions and its perennial and unquenchable power of Renewal. There can be only one explanation of this. Christianity is an abstraction and cannot renew itself. Christians are frail and erring mortals. The power of self-quickenings, even in the very midst of decay and death, which has marked the history of Christendom, is to be traced to the changeless, tireless working of the Spirit of Christ, who is the Spirit of the ever-living, ever-working Almighty God. To the wandering children of men there is a voice that says—

“One band ye cannot break—the force that clip  
And grasps your circles to the central light;  
Yours is the prodigal comet’s long ellipse,  
Self-exiled to the farthest verge of night,  
Yet strives with you no less that inward might  
No sin hath e’er imbruted;”

and those who have felt the constraining influence of the Spirit who brings home to the human heart the power of uttermost Divine self-sacrifice on the Cross, can understand how again and again when man’s wilfulness and rebellion, his blind folly, his selfish lust and hate and greed, his formalism and apathy, seem to have extinguished the Divine spark in the world, and well-nigh in the Church, the Spirit of Christ has wrought a new miracle, and not only healed the sick but raised the dead. There is always one answer to the question: Can these bones live? —O Lord, Thou knowest. He who holds the winds in his fists knows that the breath from the four winds is divinely ready to breathe on these slain that they may live.

The word “revival,” like so many other noble ones, has been degraded. In many minds it is associated with a brief series of excited meetings, fiery exhorta-

tions and hysterical responses, producing a commotion in town or village for a few short months, accompanied by transient reformation on the part of many, and real and abiding good wrought in the hearts of a few—to be followed by reaction, relapse and retrogression. The word revival should have a broad and deep significance. It is well to leave watching the fuss and foam of a few waves in a corner creek to trace the ebb and flow of the broad sea. A movement in a Christian nation, or in the Church as a whole, which perceptibly renews the springs of religious life and leaves the level of moral and spiritual life perceptibly higher than it had been before is a movement of revival, and its rise and progress can be traced. Some have limited its utmost duration to half-a-century, others consider that if it lasts a generation of five-and-twenty or thirty years it is all that can be expected. No arithmetic can make the calculation. But the lifetime of a great leader is limited, and in thirty years or so one generation of mankind passes, and another, trained under different influences, succeeds; so that, unless the self-propagating power of the new spiritual life be vigorous, decline in energy may be expected. But amongst the multitude of Church historians none has yet been found competent to trace out the working of a “law of revivals.”

Nothing of the kind is to be attempted here. The natural impatience of the human mind with what it considers to be the slowness and irregularity of the Divine methods should, however, be checked by the thought that Order is even to our vision discernible amidst the welter and confusion of human history. The history of the Church is not exempt from the apparent confusion, and in it is to be discerned the same gracious Order. But “short views” will not

suffice. And in the attempt to survey long periods and use large maps, much will still have to be left in uncertainty, and faith will often have to take the place of sight. One principle, however, will carry the devout student a long way. When King Arthur's Round Table is dissolved and its good knights find no successors, and its prince and leader is about to pass away, it is natural for Sir Bedivere to cry that "the true old times are dead," and that he goes forth companionless, as the days and years darken round him. He finds it hard to believe that one good custom should ever corrupt the world. But it is customs that do corrupt men. As soon as the valuable use and habit, toilsomely acquired and strenuously maintained, has settled down into a mere mechanical movement of the soul, it dies and needs to be dissolved, that from its ashes new life may spring. God fulfils Himself, not in one way, but in many ways. He still speaks *πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως*, in many parts, by many fashions. Though He has spoken once in His Son, though the Spirit of His Son is one throughout the ages, the languages of men are so many that the Divine voices need to be multiplied if all are to be reached. One generation hardly understands the dialect of its predecessor, and those who mourn the decay of old times and customs may take heart among "new men, strange faces, other minds," that the city of God remaineth and the Spirit of God, who in the beginning brooded over chaos, can replace the old order, which was good, by the new, which alone can suffice for new needs.

A study of revival movements in the past shows that no single type of leader is preserved, no uniform type of method will succeed. Conviction of sin and wholesome fear of retribution are necessary as well as the

preaching of grace and a gospel of forgiveness. Francis and Dominic differed, as Luther and Calvin differed, and as Wesley and Whitefield agreed to differ, in theology, in temperament, in utterance. Wyclif was a forerunner of Knox, but Knox did not follow in the lines of Wyclif. Any student of a reformation must find room for an Erasmus before the movement begins, and for a Melanchthon when it is over, if the whole story is to be told. And he must not forget that when the history of one reformation is over, a counter-reformation which points in a different direction may begin, and both may be necessary if those mighty plans and processes are to be carried out that are to prepare for the restitution of all things.

It is easier to study the past than to understand the present, and it is impossible to forecast the future. God's people are generally agreed that a revival is needed, and there are times when it would seem to be very nearly imminent. The darkest hour is before the dawn, but it must be remembered that the dawn is not the noontide. Those who profess to understand the signs of our own times have been telling us that "the next revival must be ethical." That is either a truism or an impossibility. No religious quickening is worth anything which does not bring moral improvement in its train. But no amount of moral improvement will produce religious quickening, though, as in the work of John the Baptist, it may prepare the way. So with the social reforms that are preached as a panacea. Improvement in the organization and habits of society is a result, not a cause, the fruit of a good tree, not its trunk or root. Fuller light upon history has shown our generation the need of more than individual renewal, if the kingdom of God is to come indeed. But it is revival

of *religion* that is needed, not revival of interest in sanitation. The last step men are inclined to take is the first that is needed—the recognition of radical evil in the human heart and earnest seeking after God to set it right. The chief cause of decline in religion is the neglect of regard for the direct work of the Holy Spirit. The invariable sign that renewal is at hand is to be found in a contrite, importunate, persistent seeking after His quickening power.

It is this fact which often delays the hoped-for day. Men—in the Church as well as in the world—shrink from confession and shun humiliation and contrition. The self-reproach, self-denial and self-discipline which prepare the way for self-renewal are not pleasant or easy processes. It is proverbially harder to raise a decaying Church than to start a new one. Vested interests are the chief enemies of civil and political reforms. In Church life, as in society, “custom lies upon us with a weight, heavy as frost and deep almost as life.” It would seem as if open sin were easier to cure than religious formalism. Christ reserved His severest denunciations for the religion falsely so called which was hindering the development of new and vigorous religious life. St. Paul strove hard to reach the fossilized hearts of his countrymen and kinsfolk according to the flesh, but again and again in the synagogues he was compelled to cry, Since ye thrust from you the new spiritual truth and the quickening spiritual life, lo ! we turn to the Gentiles. The only unpardonable sin is wilful, deliberate, persistent resistance to the Holy Spirit. For the individual, the Church, the nation, that will leave room for Him to do His own work, all things are possible and all things will soon become new.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

*“And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.”*—REV. xxii. 17.

*“Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,  
Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings,—  
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,  
Sadly contented in a show of things;—  
Then with a rush the intolerable craving  
Shivers throughout me like a trumpet-call,—  
Oh to save these! to perish for their saving,  
Die for their life, be offered for them all!”*

—MYERS, *St. Paul.*

*“God is nigh thee, He is with thee, He is within thee. I tell thee, Lucilius, there is a holy Spirit who sits within us all, the observer and the guardian of all the good and evil we do.”*

—SENECA.

*“That God which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off Divine event  
To which the whole creation moves.”*

—TENNYSON.

## X

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

It is not by accident that just before the first missionary journey of the first great Christian missionary was undertaken, we read, "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Nor is it a mere form of speech that St. Luke uses when he says that the Apostles went through Phrygia and Galatia, "having been forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak the word in Asia," and that when they attempted to go into Bithynia, "the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not," but that thus guided they came to Troas, and heard the voice of a man of Macedonia calling, Come over and help us. True, there are modes of explaining away this language, familiar enough to the present generation. But the believer in the New Testament account of the origins of Christianity asks himself what this guidance of the Holy Spirit really meant at the time, and what, if there be one, is its modern counterpart.

For a deeply significant view of life underlies this phraseology which applies to all aggressive efforts on the part of the Church of Christ. By "Missions" we understand attempts to evangelize, at home or abroad; and such attempts may be made with or without direct Divine impulse and guidance. The human view of mission work—perfectly sound as far as it goes—is concerned with the truth that is preached, the men

chosen to carry the message, the study of languages necessary for preaching, the organization of "native" Churches, and a long series of similar processes. It is conceivable that all this work might be carried on under the control of secondary Divine laws, the natural results following upon the earnest propaganda of the Christian Gospel for mankind. Prayer to Almighty God and recognition of entire dependence upon Him would, of course, be an essential part of the process, but direct operations of the Holy Spirit might be—and at certain periods of the Church has been—regarded as a doctrine of "enthusiasm," a belief in the supernatural worthy only of fanatics.

A very suggestive passage occurs in the Report of Commission IV to the Edinburgh Conference, on "The missionary message in relation to non-Christian religions." Dr. Cairns says: "Much labour has been expended in discussion on the place of the Spirit in the life of God. But we still wait for any understanding of the place of the Spirit in the life of man. . . . Have we fully realized the immeasurable value of the idea of the Holy Spirit in the light which Comparative Religion, and in particular in the light which India, casts on the inner nature of the religious aspiration of man?"<sup>1</sup>

What difference would be made in actual working if the view of the writer of "Acts" be true, and the direct operation of the Holy Spirit be regarded not only as a reality, but as *the* chief reality in all mission work? For there have been periods in Church history since—take the early mediaeval missions for example—when this was the case. There have been communities, like the Moravians, and numberless individual missionaries, like David Hill of China or

<sup>1</sup> *Report of World Missionary Conference*, Vol. IV, p. 255.

Gilmour of Mongolia, whose every step was dominated and directed by this great conception. Theoretically, every Christian accepts the doctrine of the guidance of the Spirit, but in this department of Christian service, as in others, the realization of the immediate personal working of God the Holy Spirit is apt to be faint and weak. How would foreign missionary work, for example, the tremendous importance of which is now being appreciated by the Churches, be affected by a mighty revivifying of the conscious presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst?

## I

It either is or is not true that the Spirit of God works in the heart of every man on the face of the earth. It is or is not true that God leaves not Himself without witness in every heart, that there is a light which lighteth every man, that the nations which have not "the law," or "revelation," as generally understood, have the law or revelation written on their hearts. It either is or is not true that when truth, as truth is in Jesus, is faithfully preached, the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. And if these things are true, according to New Testament conceptions, the scattering of the seed of the Kingdom throughout the whole is sowing in a prepared field. To hold these things is to do more than believe that "in all ages

"Every human heart is human,  
That in even savage bosoms  
There are longings, yearnings, strivings,  
For the good they comprehend not;  
That the feeble hands and helpless,  
Groping blindly in the darkness,  
Touch God's right hand in that darkness,  
And are lifted up and strengthened."

It implies a belief in an active agency of that Right Hand, that the yearnings and strivings of which the poet speaks are not mere human strivings, but movements of the Spirit of God Himself. It means that a missionary, not only in India, but in Patagonia, not only among Buddhists, but among Fijians, orders his speech as to those in whom God the Holy Spirit has already been at work, and that there is, and can be, no man of whom that is not true. St. Paul believed it and preached accordingly. To the Jews he became as a Jew, and to those who were without law he became as without law, that he might by all means save some. At Antioch in Pisidia he pleaded in the synagogue out of the Scriptures, so that many Jews and devout proselytes followed him. At Athens in the Areopagus he pleaded with his “unusually religious”<sup>1</sup> hearers that God is not far from every one of us, and that his message was to interpret the mind of that Deity of whom their own poets had said, We are his offspring. When Tertullian spoke of the human soul as by nature Christian, he meant that there is no race, no nation, no man under God’s sun to whom Christian truth cannot be made to appeal under some aspect, when rightly presented.

But a belief in the Holy Spirit implies more than this. It implies a living link between all human spirits, because the same Divine Spirit speaks to all. Carlyle’s Irish widow in Edinburgh, when charitable relief for herself and her children had been refused, proved her sisterhood to those who disowned her, when the typhus fever, of which she died, spread and killed seventeen others in the neighbourhood. There

<sup>1</sup> This must be the connotation of δεισιδαιμονεστέροι here. St. Paul surely never began an address by striking his audience in the face and calling them “superstitious.”

are many ways of proving the solidarity of the race, but one of the soundest and most abiding is the fact that under the strangest disguises the human heart has the same needs, the same kinship to the Divine, and is more or less effectively taught by the same Divine Spirit.

Illustrations abound. A fresh sheaf of very interesting comparisons has been gathered by Canon Robinson of the S.P.G. in his volume on *The Interpretation of the Character of Christ to Non-Christian Races*. He shows how the ideals and goals which the Hindu, the Buddhist, the Confucian, the Moslem respectively set before themselves have much in common, much which can only be realized by the methods of Christ and the Gospel. True, the ideals are not entirely the same, and the sceptical conclusion that "all religions are substantially the same" which is drawn by some students of Comparative Religion is not justified by the facts. There is much in the character of Christ which does not directly appeal to the non-Christian mind. But the argument is, that which the Mussulman, or the Buddhist, seeks for in mistaken fashion, Christ provides in the only satisfactory way. He is the true Bread, the true Light, because, amidst the blindness and hunger of humanity, He only can bestow eyesight for the mind and food which can permanently comfort and satisfy the heart of man. These statements are now happily amongst the commonplaces of missionary literature. But to grope amongst abstract doctrines for points of contact and correspondence is one thing, and to realize that the same Spirit of Christ who is guiding the thought of the missionary as he teaches has been, and is, guiding the feeble gropings of the heathen who listen and has not been absent from the subtle speculations of

Hellenic and Brahminical sages, is quite another. One touch of that Spirit makes the whole world kin.

## II

It might be thought that Churches and Societies, when undertaking foreign missionary work, would always recognize the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit. To a large extent they undoubtedly do, and very few have any right to judge them. But all human agencies and organizations are human, and one ineradicable infirmity of human nature is to become so occupied in the details of processes as to forget unseen causes, and in laboriously perfecting the means to lose sight of the End of ends. The engineer must concentrate his attention upon the machinery because it is his business to see that that is in order, and for many who are engaged in Church work the important feature is its machinery. If money has to be raised, the best efforts of the Church are apt to be centred on money-raising. If the training of agents, the maintenance of schools, the organization of effort in the mission field, be the immediate work in hand, it is not in human nature—as the phrase runs—to avoid being so absorbed in the details of the process as more or less to lose sight of the operation of that Power on which all the rest depends. The best workers are often in the most danger of such undue concentration, and without a measure of it the work would never be done at all.

It is not inconsistent with this to say that these tendencies need from time to time to be counterbalanced by higher considerations, and that the real success of all aggressive effort depends upon the

measure in which they are counterbalanced by a recognition of the direct work of the Holy Spirit. It is well when any Church Council can say, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." A notable illustration of this was furnished in the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910. A gathering in which human effort had been put forth to the utmost, in preparation for which incredible toil and pains had been spent and organization elaborated almost to a fault, found itself in a sacred Presence which banished all these elements into the background, almost as if they did not exist. God is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him. When God speaks, men are instinctively silent, and in Edinburgh, men, hearing His voice, were the more silent that He might speak the more powerfully. It was this feature which distinguished that particular Conference from a hundred excellent conventions in which everything has been admirably ordered, and from which men have gone away commenting on the perfect way in which everything has been managed. Talent works, genius creates. All the efforts man can put forth for the extension of the Kingdom are needed, but it is the touch of the Divine which inspires, transforms, vivifies. Any overpowering force which would compel all Christians always to put first things first in spiritual work would revive the Church to-day and regenerate the world to-morrow.

This may be seen if we think out the direct operation of the Spirit in relation to (1) religious convictions, (2) Christian motives, and (3) the spirit and temper of Christian enterprise. So many of the religious ideas that are current to-day are not deep convictions, and they need to be made such. So many genuine convictions are held in reserve in the

background of the mind, and they need to be made living, active, fiery, penetrative. Christian motives operate, but languidly and imperfectly. It might not be necessary to go far in order to find a congregation that would hardly respond to the plea "for Christ's sake," that would nevertheless gather in crowds to hear a foreigner in outlandish costume tell strange stories in broken English. The very phrase, "love of Christ," whilst to every Christian it is a real force, is very often found acting intermittently, irregularly, at best feebly. A motive ought to move men. A strong motive should move them mightily. A constraining, compelling motive should move them irresistibly. But of the motive power which is all that some modern Churches can boast, none of these things are true. Further, if Christ's Kingdom is to come, not only must Christian truth be taught and Christian actions performed, but the teaching must be given and the work done in a Christian way. Lack of Christian spirit and temper is a cause of failure in Christian enterprise, perhaps more frequently than lack of sound and accurate Christian doctrine.

If it be said that these faults are freely recognized and generally deplored, the answer is that the one remedy is within reach, but the Church seems to have lost the secret of its use. No power can deeply root religious truth so as to make it a conviction and fill it with a fervour that will make it glow and burn, except the living Spirit of God. None can energize the motive power of the Church and make it adequate to drive her complex machinery but the Holy Spirit. Therefore it is that the prayer is offered to Him to "come with all His quickening powers, to shed abroad the Saviour's love and thus to kindle ours." Finally, no power that man can summon to his aid can endue

him with the Christian spirit and temper but the Spirit Himself at work in the inner chamber of the heart. One word spoken under His direction will accomplish what human eloquence toils in vain to achieve. If it be said that these things are truism, there is but one reply. Only the Divine Spirit Himself can so stir and shake the Church to its very depths that truism may be translated into truths that will prove mighty to the pulling down of strongholds and the bringing of every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

### III

Barnabas and Saul were called to their work, and the call came to them before the same voice called to the prophets and Church at Antioch. The Voice that then spoke is not now silent, but it is more difficult to hear it amidst the contending voices of these latter days. The chief difficulty, however, is caused not by the voices that oppose, but by those that compete. The tempter who bids men to throw duty to the winds that inclination may be followed is known to be a tempter, but when duties seem to conflict, and duties and inclinations are curiously and inextricably mingled together, the servant of God often strains his ears in vain to distinguish the one calm, clear voice that points out the one pathway in which he ought to walk. And, unless the habit of listening has been cultivated, the obedient heart cannot readily single out the note of the One Supreme Leader of men even when it is heard. Yet it seems clear that, if the Church of Christ is not only to live but to lead men, if it claims to bring men into the one truth that can adequately illumine and the one shelter that is

man's true home, if it is to be the means of conveying religious inspiration and stimulus to an erring or a slumbering world, it must be itself quickened and guided by a living voice. No "dead facts stranded on the shore of the oblivious years" will suffice; no order however admirable, no government however strong and uniform, will serve. Men will hear and heed those who are following at first hand the voice of the living God; tenth-hand and twentieth-hand knowledge is common enough, and known to be hollow and vain.

In the Church of Christ where service is concerned there is surely a voice that all can hear. The special call to the elect soul for special kinds of service will not, and cannot, rightly come except in the midst of a community accustomed to listen for themselves. "When the Lord gave the law from Sinai, He wrought wondrously with His voice," says the *Shemoth Rabba*, a Rabbinic commentary on Exodus. "And each one in Israel heard it according to his capacity: old men and youths and boys and sucklings and women; the voice was to each one as he had power to receive it." As with the law of Moses, still more with the Spirit of Christ. If the Gospel of Christ is to fill and sway the world, every Christian must hear the voice of the Spirit calling him to spread it. "Every Moslem merchant is a missionary," said a speaker at the Edinburgh Conference, who was describing from his own experience the rapid extension of Islam in the interior of North Africa. Whereas a worker of experience amongst Orientals in this country has recently stated that "it is a notorious fact that Oriental men who have come under Christian influence in their Asiatic homes have definitely been sent to England, because this was considered to be

the surest method to check any tendencies towards Christianity.”<sup>1</sup>

The young convert as a rule does hear it clearly, and tries his best to obey it. But the world is strong, and the flesh is weak, and too often the Church does not help him. Thus he becomes silent, and becomes, if not deaf and dumb, slow of speech and hard of hearing. But the indwelling Spirit is not silent, and from time to time the call for service rings forth sonorous. Through a student’s volunteer movement it may sound in the University, that little world in which are so many ringing voices, full of vitality and youth. Through an American layman’s missionary movement it may even sound in the midst of the world of business, asserting it to be the noblest and best business of every Christian man to play his part in the evangelization and salvation of a world. But in each case it must be the voice within that summons. The sound may pass from lip to lip, and when voices join in chorus the music is fuller and more far-reaching, but each man, woman and child must hear the voice within and recognize it for what it is, the call of the Spirit of God for work in the service of man.

The word “call” is often reserved for the clergy. If they claim it as specially theirs, it is the more important that they should show how distinctively and emphatically God has summoned them. It is one thing to be of those who were fascinated by the pure and heavenly speech of Jesus the prophet of Nazareth, another to be of those who, “when they had brought their boats to land, *left all* and followed Him.” It is one thing to enter an honourable and learned profession, which may rank with law and medicine, or

<sup>1</sup> *East and West*, January 1911, p. 14.

even compete in attractiveness with the army, and quite another to be ready to carry the message of the Cross wherever He who once bore it for men bids His servant to carry it as a banner to victory.

Few short treatises are more needed than one which should deal adequately with the "call to the ministry," as well as with the after-call which guides a minister as to where God would have him labour. But who dare write it? What intimate knowledge of the Divine voice, what absolute readiness to obey it, what long experience of its accents and of the secrets learned by obedience must he have who undertakes to say how God speaks in the inner circle of His chosen ones! None the less it is certain that in proportion as the whole Church is charismatic—filled with the gifts and graces of the Spirit—all kinds of men will hear this special call to missionary service at home and abroad who now are not likely to hear it, because they never dream of expecting it. Especially must this be so if world-evangelization is contemplated. It is easy to count up the millions to whom the Gospel has not been preached, but if they are to be effectively reached the messengers must not be reckoned by units, but by thousands. Till the whole Church of Christ is moved it is vain to expect a movement Christwards through the whole world.

Side by side with the interior call of the man who, when about to be ordained, declares that he "trusts that he is inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him this office and ministry," it is usual to speak of "the call of the Church." Undoubtedly there are many qualifications for service of which a man cannot judge himself, and with regard to which he is ready to be guided by the judgment of others. On some of these points spiritual discernment is un-

necessary. A medical examination, a literary examination, even a Biblical examination, may be conducted by general principles that all can understand. But the ultimate judgment must be spiritual, or it will be vain. Not pseudo-spiritual, for the hollow echoes of real voices are sometimes mistaken for the true by the superficial and unwary. It is a solemn question for every Church to answer—How is the final decision as to admission into the ranks of the ministry, at home or abroad, definitively reached? It may be the bishop, with the help of his chaplains—or the presbytery and the General Assembly—or the pastoral Conference—or the rank and file of a local autonomous community; but the decision is so momentous that every corporate body calling itself a Christian Church is bound as in God's sight to see that that work is well and truly done by the direct operation of the Divine Spirit, or ruin follows. A vast congregation in a cathedral may chant *Veni Creator Spiritus*, or a handful of godly men in a country village may be choosing a pastor, but unless God the Holy Spirit calls the man and the same Spirit is guiding the Church the whole procedure is little better than a mockery. And when evangelists are needed, not for familiar home spheres, but for foreign lands, to do pioneer work, to stand alone, to control large areas of enterprise, to enter into the thoughts of an alien people, to touch with prompt and many-sided sympathies the hearts of multitudes belonging to another race—then it is absolutely necessary for the Church to make the right choice. And no power can guide it aright but the voice of the Spirit speaking from the very shrine of that spiritual house which is the very temple of the living God.

## IV

The Holy Spirit alone furnishes the secret of true unity. Unity in the ranks of the Christian army as it goes forth to bloodless victory; unity amongst the kingdoms of this world when at last they become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Christians at least profess always to be seeking for unity, but a large proportion steadfastly refuse to adopt the only promised means for obtaining it.

The New Testament Churches were at one because they enjoyed "the unity of the Spirit"; they were bidden not to make it, but to keep it (Eph. iv. 3). St. Paul obviously meant a oneness which the Holy Spirit Himself effected by His indwelling, the "one Spirit" mentioned in the next verse. It is true he mentions "one body," and the mystical body of Christ cannot be multiplied or divided. But it is the living Head who makes it one, and the indwelling Breath of God that keeps it one. St. Paul would never have separated the two halves of Irenæus' sentence, "Where the Spirit is, there the Church is; and where the Church is, there the Spirit is and all true liberty." But if he had been compelled to take either alone, he would have chosen the former half—the root which would bring the fruits, not the fruit which is unable to exist without the roots. If the Church was truly one at first, it was not in virtue of a uniformly defined creed, or a universally accepted code, or an exactly identical mode of government in all the Churches, but because all acknowledged one Father, one Lord and one Spirit who was the very bond of fellowship with the Father and the Son and the bond of union in the members one with another.

The “unhappy divisions” which separate Christians to-day are only too familiar. There are many proposed methods of remedying them, but they all rest on one or other of two contrasted principles. One is external and depends upon the letter of a common confession and the order of a common hierarchy; the other is internal and depends upon the welding influence of a common faith, a common hope and, above all, the fellowship in common of one Spirit. The two are not necessarily opposed to one another, but in practice men are obliged to lay the chief emphasis upon either one or the other. Unfortunately the larger part of Christendom to-day agrees to lay stress upon external union rather than upon internal unity. They persist in mistranslating  $\piολμνη$  “fold,” when it should be “flock,” in John x. 16, being quite sure that unless there is one fold, there cannot be one flock. Augustine led the way in substituting *ovile* for *grex*, and the Vulgate, which in the Church of Rome has the authority of the sacred original, has fixed the meaning of Christ’s promise in the same sense. But one fold, even under a would-be-infallible head, cannot constitute the unity, even of a flock of sheep. The living body of many members under one Head can only be made one, or kept one, by one indwelling Spirit. And if the Spirit of Christ in the unrolling of the centuries manifests Himself by the bestowment of “grace, gifts and fruit,” such as are in accordance with the mind of Christ and prove the presence of Christ, often in unexpected ways and quarters, the unity of the future can only be realized by following His guidance.

The history of foreign missions—which on the world-scale is only now commencing—proves this, and is likely more fully to prove it. The older

countries, inheriting an older civilization, are more or less under the domination of venerable tradition based on the gravely erroneous ideal of mediæval times. Hildebrand's dream was shared for centuries by some of the noblest spirits of Christendom. Unity as uniformity was the principle which shaped Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity, Five-Mile and Convention Acts in this country. The cast-iron theory of ecclesiastical uniformity is fast breaking to pieces under the stress of new forces. The new wine is once again bursting the old wine-skins. The Holy Spirit's faintest breath is mightier than the most firmly cemented structures of ecclesiastics. The missionary enterprises of the nineteenth century have been preparing a new outlook for the churches of the twentieth. Not that any sudden changes are to be expected, or are even desirable. Two great churches of Christendom, the Roman and the Greek, were not represented at the World Missionary Conference in 1910, and the delegates of the Anglican Church could only be present under special reservations. But those who were present were constrained to recognize a mighty unifying Power in the presence of which ecclesiastical theories were as tow touched by living flame. No one present would have been so foolish as to undervalue ecclesiastical theories, or consider them unimportant in their place; the great feature of the Conference was that they were made to keep their place. No crude and flimsy resolutions on the subject of "organic union" were dreamed of, but a passing Vision illumined the assembly, and the very faces of many of the speakers, as it was given them afresh to see how a Divine Unity will one day flood the Churches, so that lines of separation, which may for a time have their value, shall no longer be barriers

to the influx and irresistible afflatus of the One Spirit, the Lord, the Life-giver.

So with the ingathering of the nations. They are coming in from north and south, from east and west, very slowly as yet. But within the last decade it has been possible to perceive their possible lines of travel, as never before. Movements in India and Japan, in China and Korea, have shown us the unchanging East beginning to change as the heavy pack-ice in the Arctic zone yields in the opening springtime—a change which means not a revolt, but a revolution. As the process of evangelization goes on and Christ wins those victories which every Christian firmly believes that sooner or later He will gain, how will unity be reached and maintained? Is it to be supposed that when old races become new nationalities inspired by a new faith, they will all keep exactly the old moulds of creed and government that were fashioned in Europe a thousand years before? Already they are saying, "Your denominationalism does not interest us"; is it likely, or desirable, that it should? It is quite true that the spirit of independence in mission-churches may develop too rapidly for health and safety, that Japan and China may be disposed to tell the European missionary too soon that it is his business to "open the door and get out of the doorway." But though the child may sometimes be in too great a hurry to become a man, a man he will become if he lives, and the privileges of manhood must accompany its fully developed powers.

It is idle to prophesy, but it is foolish not to mark and learn from the signs of the times. A spiritual Church carrying the message of a spiritual Gospel, and being instrumental in founding spiritual communities in lands awakening from the sleep of

centuries, must expect them to enjoy and use their spiritual freedom. This will result not in a formal, mechanical uniformity, but in that unity which only the Spirit of God can inspire and maintain. Then it will be the turn of the churches at home to learn lessons from their children abroad; and when the "other sheep" are gathered in, "which are not of this fold," all will hear together the One Voice and become "one flock, one Shepherd."

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH—TEACHER OF  
TEACHERS

*“When He, the Spirit of truth, is come. He shall guide you into all the truth.”*—JOHN xvi. 13.

*“There is in her [Wisdom] a spirit quick of understanding, holy, alone in kind, manifold . . . all-powerful, all-surveying and penetrating through all spirits that are quick of understanding. . . . For she is a breath of the power of God and a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty . . . and from generation to generation passing into holy souls she maketh men friends of God and prophets.”*—WISDOM vii. 22-27.

*“It was only through the successive breathings of the Life-giving Spirit of the Truth throughout the ages that the Life-giving Lord should yield for human use the virtue of this one and abiding life.”*—F. J. A. HORT.

*“Scarcely I catch the words of His revealing,  
    Hardly I hear Him, dimly understand;  
Only the Power that is within me pealing  
    Lives on my lips and beckons to my hand.  
Whoso hath felt the Spirit of the Highest  
    Cannot confound, nor doubt Him, nor deny;  
Yea, with one voice, O world, though thou deniest,  
    Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.”*

—F. W. MYERS.

## XI

### THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH—TEACHER OF TEACHERS

For every Christian the Lord Jesus Christ is the Truth, as well as the Way and the Life. But Christ Himself gave the most suggestive comment on His own declaration by adding, "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all the truth." The Church of Christ has hardly yet assimilated this doctrine. What is the connection between the teaching of the Master in the days of His flesh, and the teaching of the Spirit who throughout the centuries is to guide succeeding generations in the right understanding and application of His words? A great body of Christian teachers is continually at work attempting to unfold Christian truth; who is to teach them, and how? With the words of Christ on record, with the Apostolic interpretation of His Person and work as primary direction, with the traditions of two millenniums of Fathers and Doctors handed faithfully down, those who teach living men to-day the doctrine of a living Christ still need to have a living Guide for themselves. What is meant by the statement that the Holy Spirit guides Christ's disciples now into all the truth, and how may they expect the promise to be fulfilled?

## I

The office of the Comforter has, naturally enough for the multitude, taken precedence of the work of the Spirit of Wisdom. But teachers of all men, to-day of

all days, need assured guidance into truth. And it is interesting to note that in post-Apostolic times, and especially among the Greek Fathers, the Spirit is identified with Wisdom. The first use of the word "Trinity" in Christian literature is found in Theophilus of Antioch about A.D. 180, and it runs in this unexpected form—"In like manner also the three days which were before the luminaries, are types of the Trinity—of God, His word and His wisdom," where wisdom is clearly a name of the Holy Spirit. Elsewhere he says, "He then being Spirit of God and governing principle and wisdom and power of the Highest, came down upon the prophets," and Irenæus identifies the Holy Spirit with the wisdom of God mentioned in the Old Testament together with the word of God as creating, preserving and controlling all things.

Doubtless the ante-Nicene Fathers are not found using words with the ordered precision of later days, or making the subtle metaphysical distinctions which are characteristic of the later fourth century. But they were careful not to let slip the teaching of the Old Testament, that Wisdom was with God from the beginning as a Master-workman, that the Spirit of God is the source of all wisdom, and that all wisdom in the spirit of man is drawn directly from the in-breathing of the Divine Spirit. Some of them were familiar with the teaching of Philo, who identified the Divine Logos and Wisdom; and all of them knew well the book called "The Wisdom of Solomon," which in its own fashion combined the best that was to be found in the Hebraism and Hellenism of the time. "For wisdom is more mobile than any motion—nothing defiled can find entrance into her. For she is an effulgence from everlasting light, an unspotted

mirror of the working of God and an image of His goodness." The great leaders of the Alexandrian school who did so much to shape Christian theology, Clement, Origen, Athanasius and the rest, never forgot that Christ is not only the power of God, but the wisdom of God, and it is difficult to over-estimate the value of the work they did in consolidating the Christian thought of their own time and handing on a weighty and well-considered system of teaching to those who came after them.

But it is quite possible to follow these master-teachers in the letter rather than in the spirit. They were the able guides they proved to be because they were led in the fourth century by the Spirit of Christ, who is the Spirit of truth; and teachers of the twentieth century are to be guided by Him rather than by them. The faith once for all delivered to the saints needed interpretation for the Christians of Alexandria and Rome and Constantinople in the days of the Great Councils, and so much is to be learned even yet from the creeds and expositions of those days that no wise Christian thinker of to-day despises or disparages them. But the Spirit of truth who guided the Fathers—let it be admitted, amidst many mistakes and failures, from which no human seekers after truth are exempt—is needed to-day as much as ever—we may be forgiven for thinking, more than ever. Surely His guidance is to be expected. How? By what celestial chemistry are old truths and new to be combined so that all that is precious in both may be retained? What did Christ mean by His pregnant words concerning the Spirit—He shall glorify Me: He shall take of Mine and shall declare it unto you: He shall show you things to come? Has the Saviour, who promised to His Apostles that in time of need

and stress “the Holy Spirit shall teach you in that very hour what ye ought to say,” deserted His messengers in the latter years? He foresaw the need of guidance for “those who should believe on Me through their word,” and a study of His teaching may show how He intended that that guidance should be sought and given.

## II

What, for example, did our Lord mean by the scribe who was “made a disciple unto the kingdom of heaven” bringing out of his treasure things new and old? Perhaps we cannot be sure of the exact scope of the figure employed in Matt. xiii. 52. Is the householder providing food for the multitude, various provisions for various needs, “all manner of precious fruits, new and old” (Song vii. 13), new confections and old wine that is far better than the crude must of yesterday? Or is he, as is common in the East, unfolding the resources of a rich wardrobe, so many changes of raiment, brand-new fabrics of latest style, old laces and gold-embroidered garments possessing dignity and historic interest? Or rather, jewels and furniture of diverse history and value, heirlooms from a distant past, bright new ornaments, carved chests from the stores of ancient kings? It does not matter. We spoil the illustration by narrowing it down to detail; let it stand in its original breadth and generality—he “bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.” The application to our own time, a period in which so much is said of the old faith and the new knowledge, may well prove to be fruitful and instructive.

Every teacher must be first a learner, every real

learner ought to become in his own measure a teacher. This is true in all departments of life; we cannot teach what we do not know, we cannot know without learning by the methods proper to the subject. The learned man is called a scholar because he is content to acknowledge ignorance, to open his mind and sit at the feet of those who are wiser than he. In science we must observe, collect instances, experiment, verify. In metaphysics we analyze, discriminate, reason, confirm. In art students open their eyes and heart to receive lessons of beauty, patiently toil over technical processes, submitting to laws which it is painful to obey in order to communicate delight which it is a joy to impart. The successful manufacturer and the skilled artisan, the craftsman and the labourer of all types, are not exempt from laws which apply to all human acquisitions and achievements.

Not least is this the case in the sphere of religion. Those who carried God's message of old time were men who had been taught of God. The prophet who would speak a word in season to him who is weary must be one who has learned divine lessons, who has been awakened morning by morning to be taught the highest love. The ready tongue can only be inspired by the willing and waiting heart. The priest who was to help in the work of revealing God to man and bringing man near to God needed long and careful training. The "wise man" who taught in proverbs might be supposed to be educated in society, the possessor of a shrewd eye and a ready wit, but he, more, perhaps, than other teachers, had learned the lesson that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.

In later times another type of teacher had come to

the front, and in the time of Christ he was known as the “scribe.” He spent his time in mastering the details of an ecclesiastical code, becoming familiar with traditional precedents and decisions, that he might hand them on and add to their numbers—a doctor, a lawyer, a rabbi, a teacher of the schools. He is not lovely in our eyes. But it must be remembered that he had conscientiously taken much trouble to master what was esteemed the highest knowledge attainable: he had studied, arranged, codified and made the subject his own; he built a hedge round the law and a hedge round that hedge, his whole object being to keep God’s commandments inviolate and the name of Him who had given them sacred, as in a very holy of holies.

Then had come One who taught “not as the scribes.” His words carried their own weight, were stamped with their own credentials, proclaimed their own authority. None could hear them unmoved and their main teaching was concerning God. The Father was made known by the Son as never before: the truth revealed concerning Him lived, palpitated and glowed in the very utterance; it was brought home with immediate directness to men’s business and bosoms; the kingdom of which others had had much to say took on new meaning and character, it was not to come with “observation”—the craning of the neck into the distance to watch for an unimaginable portent—it was in their very midst.

Christ proclaimed a new spiritual order, to attain which there was no need to climb the heaven or cross the sea; men had but to look within and search around them. No new God was declared, yet the new light shed on the nature of Him, whom the fathers had known and worshipped, gave an altogether new idea

of His mind and will, and altogether new conceptions of what was meant by His tabernacling among men and the establishment of His dominion upon earth. The message came, Repent, change both mind and habit from the old hard, selfish, conventional ways; be born again, become as little children with simple, wondering, trustful and obedient hearts; be baptized, not only with water to cleanse from the evil of the past, but with the Holy Spirit and with fire to purify from within and inform with new celestial energy. Above all, Love; love God with heart and mind and soul and strength, love man as man, whether friendly or hostile, generous or ungrateful; so shall new relations between God and men usher in a new heaven and a new earth, a new social organism of renovated spirits, a kingdom whose full coming shall mean that the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven.

### III

Hence arose a new world, of which Christ Himself is the centre. "My disciple" is a more frequent phrase with Him than "disciple of the kingdom," but the two mean the same thing. A new sort of scribism, this. You shall learn, He says, not necessarily from books and manuscripts. Not that there is any need to despise a good book, "the precious life-blood of a master-spirit embalmed and treasured up to a life beyond life." You shall learn, not necessarily dogmas of the schools. Not that men should decry healthy doctrine, the best thoughts on the most sacred subjects framed in the best words attainable. You shall learn, not necessarily from carefully compiled ethical codes. Not that any wise man will slight or disregard these, precepts of highest sanction and most sacred obliga-

tion, the behests of a duty which may be the “stern daughter of the voice of God,” but which also means “the Godhead’s most benignant grace.”

Doctrines, traditions, laws, principles are inculcated—but alive, not dead; no fossils, but instinct with vital energy. The school of this kingdom is one of spiritual experience; its training is not one of poring over musty tomes, or repeating parrot-like phrases which are only half-understood and wholly uncared for. A man cannot enter the kingdom, cannot even see it, without a new nature; wise men may miss it, while babes enjoy it. Learn of Me, says the Teacher, in simplicity and meekness, throwing aside prejudice, selfishness and hardness of heart, opening wide the doors of affection and trustfulness, gaining fuller insight into the will of God by unfailing obedience to His voice when heard—“if any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.” For all is embodied in Him who is the way, the truth and the life. Whoever seeks to embody living truths in abstract propositions—and no true teacher ever does—Jesus Christ does not make disciples thus. He came to be the truth, not simply to declare it. Only the Son can reveal the Father, the nature of the kingdom can only be seen in its King. His are words which are spirit and life, indeed, and in Him is a fountain of redeeming energy enabling men to realize their meaning in action. Learn of Me, says He who is the lowliest and the loftiest of all masters; drink not from the pool, not from the cistern, not from the reservoir, but from the fountain of life indeed.

So the first disciples found it and generations of Christ’s followers since. Those who have learned of Him have had placed in their hands a talisman, with its secret watchword, opening up mountain-caves close

by their side, rich in treasure, a key to the knowledge of nature, man and God. Jesus said nothing about nature in the modern senses of the word, but the whole world was His, as all our science cannot make it ours. He knew man perfectly, the best as well as the worst of human nature; none exposed more sternly than He the evil of hardness and hypocrisy, none more tenderly pitied man's weakness and waywardness, yearning after the lost and giving Himself to the uttermost in order to reclaim them. Christ understood man and nature because He knew God. Others guess and wonder and dream; He knows. Where other religious teachers scatter a few clouds from the lower firmament of the spiritual sky He shoots up a straight shaft of access into the farthest azure, and a vision of glory appears indeed, such as can never be forgotten or lost. When a "scribe" is made a disciple of this kingdom and knows God and man and nature as Christ makes him, he has found a new world such as eye sees not, ear hears not, and which cannot otherwise enter into the heart of man.

He bids all His followers still to receive His Holy Spirit into their hearts, and to let Him do His work of cleansing, renewing and purifying to the uttermost. He says still to His disciples, Abide in me and I in you; and then, Ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you. If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples; and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

"Have ye understood all these things?" It is a searching question. It is only too easy for men religiously educated, professing and calling themselves Christians, having known the Bible all their lives and accepting an orthodox creed, to fail to understand these things because in the inner springs of their nature they

have not yet been made disciples to the kingdom of heaven. But all may become disciples if they will; the way is open and the grace is free. The blind from birth may have eyesight given him; the half-cured who see men as trees walking, by an added touch may be enabled clearly to scan the horizon far and near. Those whose eyes have thus been opened will easily follow on to explore.

#### IV

The abundance of the householder's store is expressed by a notable phrase, "things new and old." Why is it used? Why does not Jesus say things great and small, things useful and beautiful, things suitable for rich and poor, old and young, wise and simple? The form may be proverbial, or it may be considered generally suitable in describing a storehouse. But it probably contains a deeper significance. Jesus as a teacher had often to face this question of old and new in the realm of truth and to declare what was his attitude to both in a time of transition. The Jews were particularly tenacious of tradition, and in all ages religious people have been naturally conservative. They are usually disturbed, if not alarmed, by the cry "Thou bringest certain strange things to our ears." It is, therefore, the relation between past and future that is in the mind of the Master when He uses this phrase; the relative claims of venerable, mature experience on the one hand, and the fresh, vigorous, earnest thought of the moment on the other; the relation of successive generations to one another, the perennial contest between the *laudator temporis acti*, the tenacious upholder of the customary ideas of the past, and the eager young life full of hope and clamor-

ous for the satisfaction of the pressing needs of to-day. Hence our Lord describes the resources of a true disciple of the kingdom as sufficient for all emergencies. The supply in His treasure-house is adequate and abundant, both of things new and old.

How does the doctrine of the kingdom preserve the unity of these two? The arguments of those who plead the claims of either old or new taken separately are well known. Apart from that shallowest and laziest of all pleas which obstructs all progress because "what was good enough for our fathers is good enough for us," the better part of human nature is rightly enlisted in defence of truth already assimilated and positions already attained. In religion especially the value of existing grounds of trust causes men rightly to cling to revelations already made and to contend earnestly for the forms in which they have been delivered. Further protection for the sacred truth is afforded by ethical precepts or religious ceremonies; these in turn become *sacro-sanct*, and further doctrine is formulated to secure them in their place. Thus the process of overlaying the original deposit of truth is continued till the very significance of the original is lost and the Jewish scribes, who most honoured the law, made it void through their tradition.

On the other hand, the intellectually restless and eager are represented by the vivacious and versatile Athenians, who "spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." Novelty may become in itself an excellence, and accepted truth be discarded merely because it is familiar. The paradoxical is considered in itself admirable because it stimulates the intellectually jaded palate. The world of ideas changes for some thinkers like the book of fashions in dress; last season's garb is considered ugly

simply because it is no longer worn. For them the stigma of dulness attaches to all that is based on precedent and authority; prejudice is raised against the old, since by its very definition it has had its day, and is fit only to make way for something else.

In true religion each of these tendencies is wrong if it be taken alone. There must be a reasoned relation between the abiding and the transient; no religion can meet the needs of man which does not on the one hand preserve unchanged the eternal principles of right and wrong, both human and divine, and on the other take full account of new conditions, new knowledge, and new requirements, as the generations succeed one another in unending procession. In Christianity the unity between these conflicting elements may always be preserved by men who are made disciples to the kingdom that cannot be moved. There may be a removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made; but the things which cannot be shaken will remain. These householders bring forth from their treasure things new and old, both equally valuable and easily and harmoniously blended.

Christ Himself furnishes the supreme example of this. We know how, early in His ministry, the objection was raised: "What is this—a new teaching?" How, in the Sermon on the Mount, He said that He came not to destroy but to fulfil; that no jot or tittle of the law should fail till it had been fulfilled. In the brief parable of Luke v. 39, Christ laid stress on the value of the old, as such, and more than once He upheld the judgments of those who spoke from Moses' seat because of the place from which the words were spoken. Yet He protested against pouring new wine into old wine-skins. He superseded that which

had been said "to them of old time" by His authoritative word "I say unto you," for a greater than Jonah, a greater than Solomon, a greater than Moses, is here. Without breaking with the past, He vindicated the rights and the duties of the present; without proclaiming a revolution, He accomplished one; while upholding the law and the prophets, He showed how the gospel realized and surpassed both. If ever there was a teacher who brought forth from His treasure things new and old, it was He who speaks to us in the Gospels.

## V

The servant was to be even as his lord. Christ declares here that those who followed Him would be like Him in their blending of old faith and new knowledge. The best-known example is that of the Apostle Paul; who more completely than he realized this combination? Brought up as a Pharisee, he never lost his zeal for righteousness. When he preached Christ crucified, it was only that that end should be attained for which the law had striven but had not been strong enough to secure. He pleads continually, "It is written," yet is so convinced of the paramount importance of the message entrusted to him that if an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel than this, he must be anathema. So with the other apostles; from Pentecost onward they followed their Lord faithfully and closely, but not slavishly. They did not put forth a replica of the Sermon on the Mount, though echoes of it are found in the epistles of Peter and James. But they were enlightened by the promised Spirit to understand the supreme importance of the Person and the Work of

Christ on earth and its consummation in heaven ; and they rightly put this in the forefront of their message. There were various types of apostolic teaching. The writers of the New Testament do not mechanically copy or imitate one another. The early sermons in the Acts are, in some respects, unlike the teaching that went before and that which followed afterward. Peter, James, John, Stephen, Paul, the writer of Hebrews and of the Apocalypse—how various are these, yet how true, every one of them, to the great central principles of Christ and His kingdom ! We need not go beyond the covers of the New Testament to find striking illustration of how possible it is for the Christian householder to bring out of the same rich gospel treasure-house things new and old.

The history of Christendom is a running commentary on the same text. What a manifold and complex development has been that of the Christian religion ; how difficult it is at this moment to define its essential character so as to include its almost infinitely various forms and manifestations ! There have been periods in its history when a clinging to old and stereotyped forms has endangered the very life of its spirit, as well as periods during which a readiness to change the form of faith has well-nigh caused the substance to disappear. But, on the whole, it has preserved its continuity while spreading into all regions of the world and translating its message into alien climes and other tongues.

The curve described by the development of Christian truth may be said to be determined by two foci : (1) belief in Jesus Christ, Son of God and son of man, and the historical revelation given in Him ; (2) the gift of the Holy Spirit whose work it is to glorify Christ, to take of the things that are His, bring them

to remembrance, and so to teach them to the Church that it may assimilate, adapt and apply to new needs the truth, "as truth is in Jesus." The process has not been without its dangers. Serious mistakes have been made, as all must acknowledge except those who consider the Church, as such, to be infallible. But, taking a broad view of Christianity through the centuries, it is remarkable how the two extremes have been avoided. On the one hand, the danger of restricting its development as Islam is fossilized by the dead hand of the Koran; on the other, the snapping of those sacred links of continuity which bind together all who call themselves Christians in loyal allegiance to Him whose name they bear.

Doctrines have changed their form while preserving their substance. It took three centuries to frame the creed of Nicæa, and some important articles of faith, on sin and grace, atonement and justification, were still more gradually wrought out. Some of these, perhaps, need reminting if they are to be made current coin for the circulation of to-day. The ethical principles laid down in the New Testament are continually receiving new illustration and new applications which may sometimes seem to make the old obsolete. But as Jesus drew from the old law the two great commandments on which He sought to base the conduct of His followers, so the great moral principles of the New Testament, tenaciously held by the Church as beyond change and repeal, are brought freshly to bear upon a perpetually changing civilization. New problems affecting the family, slavery, the position of woman, or international wars, are continually arising, and fresh appeal is continually being made to the disciples of the kingdom for their solution. These do not profess to be able to answer

all questions, to remove all difficulties; but it is part of their work in the world to show how those who have learnt in Christ's school can bring the old truth, which they assuredly believe, to bear upon hitherto unanticipated problems and practically revolutionized conditions of society.

It is in this way that the kingdom itself is to come among men. For the kingdom is coming, not come; the Church is making, not made. Christendom is, in a sense, a word of the past; its history may be traced out and written down. In a sense it is a word of the present, representing a mighty living force to-day. Still more is it a word of the future, for as yet we have not been able to see what "Christianity" fully means. He was right who, in answer to the question, Is the Christian religion "played out"? replied, It has not yet been tried. The disciples of the kingdom are, as yet, far from having exhausted the resources of the treasure-house entrusted to their care.

Ours is an age of transition. Every age forms a bridge between that which precedes and that which follows it, but to our own seems to be entrusted a specially difficult task of assimilating new knowledge, meeting new conditions, abandoning old forms and revivifying old truths. Those on whom such work is specially incumbent need not be discouraged; those who see the process going on around them need not despair. The Christ of the New Testament is for us the way, the truth and the life; not the Christ of the Sermon on the Mount, still less the shadowy personage who is all that remains when certain critics of the gospels have eliminated from the text whatever does not satisfy their ideas of what probably took place. The Christ of the New Testament, as the

Redeemer of men, is the treasure-house, and the Holy Spirit whom He promised enables us to make its contents our own. He is the way-guide into all the truth, new and old, that we need for the journey of life. Forms of dogma which have commended themselves to the Church in past centuries may change, but Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. The gospel of salvation in Him is sufficient for the individual, the nation and the race; it need not be changed, and it cannot be given up without darkening the hope of the world. But the task of bringing it to bear with new power upon new generations and new intellectual and social conditions is continually laid upon Christ's Church; it is one of which she must not complain and must not grow weary. In accomplishing it, Christ's disciples fulfil the design of their Master and work out at the same time their own salvation and that of the world whom He came to save.

“Spirit, who makest all things new,  
Thou leadest onward: we pursue  
The heavenly march sublime.  
'Neath Thy renewing fire we glow,  
And still from strength to strength we go,  
From height to height we climb.

“To Thee we rise, in Thee we rest;  
We stay at home, we go in quest,  
Still Thou art our abode.  
The rapture swells, the wonder grows,  
As full on us new life still flows  
From our unchanging God.”



THE PLENITUDE OF THE SPIRIT

*“Be filled with the Spirit.”*—EPH. v. 18.

“Be ye filled with the Spirit—that is, let the Spirit advance His presence and power in you as far and to what degree and height Himself pleaseth; do not obstruct Him in His progress, but comport with Him in all His applications unto you; and do not think you have enough of Him, until you be filled even to the brim and the receptacles of your soul will hold no more.”  
—JOHN GOODWIN.

“I saw also that there was an Ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite Ocean of light and love which flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that also I saw the infinite love of God, and I had great openings.”—GEO. FOX.

“When I found Him in my bosom,  
Then I found Him everywhere,  
In the bud and in the blossom,  
In the earth and in the air;  
And He spake to me with clearness  
From the silent stars that say,  
As ye find Him in His nearness,  
Ye shall find Him far away.”

—WALTER C. SMITH.

## XII

### THE PLENITUDE OF THE SPIRIT

ST. PAUL, who preached to the nations the Gospel of Christ, proclaimed also the Gospel of the Holy Spirit. The two are one. They may be distinguished, but they should never be separated; they supplement and illuminate one another. Through Christ we know God, through the Spirit we know Christ. The Gospel of Christ brings the message which alone can save the world, but only through the Spirit do we understand it and make it our own. A doctrine of God without Christ is a face without an eye; a doctrine of Christ without the Holy Spirit is a body without a hand, or a body possessing hands and arms complete, but without life to quicken them and energy to move them. The Apostle who cries out in holy passion, "Though an angel from heaven should preach any other Gospel than this, let him be anathema!" declares also that "none can say that Jesus is Lord but in the Holy Spirit," and "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

No letter of St. Paul goes forth without a testimony on this head. The first extant pleads with the Thessalonians that they "quench not the Spirit"; the last beseeches Timothy to guard the trust committed to him through the Holy Spirit that dwelleth in us. In "Romans," "Galatians," and throughout his teaching Paul shows that only in and through the Spirit can the Christian possess life or enjoy liberty; he presses home the exhortation, If we profess to live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk; and some-

times in intense indignation he appeals with terrible irony, Having begun in the Spirit are you for being perfected in the flesh? So in "Ephesians," which contains some of his richest and ripest teaching, he prays that the Church may be "clothed with might by the Spirit in the inward man," and it is here that we find the poignant plea which pierces every careless Christian's heart, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye are sealed to the day of redemption!"

Such teaching finds its climax in the words, "be filled with the Spirit." Another rendering is possible, found in Revised Version margin, "in spirit." The latter means "be filled in the region or sphere of your own spiritual nature," the former by the operation of the indwelling Spirit of God. It would be tedious to give the reasons which make it fairly certain that this was St. Paul's meaning. In either case "be filled" does not denote "become full of," as an empty vessel is replenished with new contents, but "find your fulness," the true realization and fulfilment of your highest being, by and through the inworking of the Holy Spirit. As in iii. 19, the climax of a series of lofty petitions, "that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God" means that you may realize your own highest capacity up to the complete measure of God's purpose and will for you and for all men, so here the Church is bidden to attain complete self-fulfilment in the Holy Spirit, for here and here alone is the true *pleroma*, or fulness of a God-given nature. As the effect of wine is to give a kind of freedom to the weary and exhausted man from (1) the cares and anxieties of life, (2) the bonds of custom and convention, (3) the fetters of a hampering self, because it loosens the restraint of the higher centres of the brain and gives free scope to the lower, so

excess in wine represents precisely the way in which the Christian is *not* to seek freer and fuller life. True freedom lies only in the mastery of lower currents by the steadily increasing might of the higher; and it is fully to be attained in the spirit as the highest part of human nature, through the presence of the Highest Being of all, the plenary indwelling of the Spirit of God Himself.

The real scope of the injunction seems then to be, Turn to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope; turn to the fountain-head, ye travellers on the journey of life. Be not satisfied with the stream which flows by the way, contaminated with earth in its turbid flow; still less with the reservoirs, always stagnant and soon drained dry; least of all, with broken cisterns, mere fragments, potsherds holding a few drops of brackish water, which is all that the world and some Churches possess. Return to the Lord the Life-Giver, the immeasurable, the illimitable, the inexhaustible, whose tireless energy pulsates through all the life of the universe, who, as the Spirit of Christ, is the very spring of life to the Church. Return again, and again and yet again; draw fresh inspiration from Him whose breath originated and whose indwelling maintains and reinforces all the spiritual life the world has ever known. Return! If to preserve sound doctrine it is necessary to reiterate the watchword, Back to Christ! so in experience, in effort, in service, it is needful continually to urge, Back to the Holy Spirit! Again and again God's people need thus to return, not so much as frail and meagre vessels soon emptied; rather as living, growing organisms, tested by the one type and woven of all Christian life, renewed by the one restoring and reviving energy, that they may rise to the full height of their God-given capacity and find

larger issues and possibilities of service in the continually new conditions which they are called upon to meet, to satisfy, and to transcend.

What do Methodists, for example, need at this hour more than anything else? There are, happily, no doctrinal differences between us; our opinions on Church government vary, though not very seriously; we are fairly well agreed as to the scope and work of Methodism in its relation to the world. We are agreed not only as to the central verities of Christianity, the Being of God and the Person and Work of Christ; but also on the Gospel privileges of believers, the paramount importance of Christian experience, the need of true spiritual fellowship among the members of the Church. We meet to consider the bearings of these great truths on the conditions of our own time; to consult together how in these days we may best assimilate afresh for ourselves, and bring home to the hearts of others, the things that are most surely believed among us.

What lack we yet? What note of all others needs to be resolutely struck at the opening of this Assembly,<sup>1</sup> till its resonant vibration penetrates every single heart? The answer goes up from all of you, almost before the question is asked—"a revival of true religion," "a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost." Alas! those words have been so often repeated that they have come to savour of cant, *i.e.* sacred words only half understood, only half felt, and more than half misapplied. What is meant by being filled with the Spirit? A score of sermons could not answer adequately. The Greek text consists of three words, while John Goodwin's treatise based on them contains more than three

<sup>1</sup> This sermon was preached at the opening of the Methodist Assembly which met in City Road Chapel, October 1909.

hundred thousand. Yet his volume is not a mere specimen of Puritan prolixity; he never deserts his great subject, so vast and various does he find it.

But do not Methodists, and all Christians at this particular juncture, need of all things else, first to understand, and then to enjoy this fulness? There is a far greater and more glorious work for these Churches to do in the future. But whether the Methodism we know and love can and will accomplish it depends, not on its numbers, its buildings, its funds, its ministers, its institutes, its enterprises, but on the measure of its spiritual power. It is not merely the presence of the Holy Spirit that is necessary—that we have by His grace—but His fulness. The mere tenure of Christian life will not suffice, the bare maintenance of spiritual existence amidst dangers and losses in the presence of an indifferent or hostile world. We are called to more abundant life, to exuberant vigour, triumphant victory. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit without stint or measure which saves and renews the life, whether of individual Christian, local society, or widely ramifying Church. Nothing short of it will suffice, and if we are deficient here we shall fail pitifully, even in the midst of what the world calls success. What is meant by the Plenitude of the Spirit?

## I

The phrase occurs in a command or exhortation; the Apostle makes use of the imperative mood. We are bidden to do, or to be—a demand is made upon us. Yet the verb is passive in form, and it is natural to object that the process described is God's work, not ours. That august Breath of God blows when and where He lists; we can neither originate nor control

Divine influence. The "baptism of the Spirit," the "outpouring of the Spirit," the "descent of the Spirit," do not denote action on our part, but the reception of an essentially Divine gift. When we read of the Primitive Church that they were "all filled with the Holy Ghost," or that Stephen or Barnabas was "full of the Holy Ghost," the impression conveyed is one of supernatural power resting on these men. Self-inspiration is absurd. To issue a command that men should acquire what God alone can confer might seem to imply either a blunder or a blasphemy.

For the difficulty is not merely verbal, it does not depend on the turn of a phrase. It is the standing difficulty of the individual and the Church in every generation. The one thing we need, Divine inspiration, is the one thing that no human effort can ever produce. The superiority of the Primitive Church over later days did not lie in knowledge; in many things we are far wiser than they. Nor in means and appliances, in organization and institutions, for in these the original community was conspicuously deficient. They were filled with the Spirit; are we? If not, why not? So with subsequent periods—the Reformation of the sixteenth century, the Evangelical Revival in the eighteenth—it is a proverbial sneer of the world that the earliest part of a religious movement is always the best, full of spontaneous Divine energy, that declension soon follows, reaction sets in, and no earthly power can regain lost inspiration.

"We cannot kindle when we  
The fire which in the heart resides;  
The spirit bloweth and is still,  
In mystery our soul abides."

Canute laughed at his courtiers when they tried to persuade him that he could bid the ocean retire from

before his royal chair placed on the sand; would he have been any less of a fool if he had commanded the sea to flood the shore when it was settling down to low ebb? Who can sway the tides of the Spirit; who can measure, who command, the tidal movements of God in history?

Decline in spiritual power may not imply anything actually sinful in the Church. It may, for man is weak, and temptations are many. Envy and jealousy may alienate Christian brethren who ought in honour to prefer one another; party spirit and strife may divide Christian comrades who ought to travel hand in hand and march shoulder to shoulder; ambition and love of power may work their mischief among ecclesiastical, as well as civil, leaders; formalism and worldliness may eat away the heart out of religious life. But there may be no sin chargeable, the primal impetus which seems spent may have changed its form, found a new course, dug a new channel. The strength of the Church may be employed in consolidation, in organization, which it would be folly to disparage in any age, most of all in ours, for hardly anything can be done without it. And yet if the Church be found declining to a lower level of life, so that instead of the breath from the four winds of heaven there is to be heard little but the rattle of ecclesiastical machinery; and if amidst a thousand schemes for raising money, organizing enterprises, promoting social and philanthropic reform, it should be found that all is present except sufficient animating and driving power? All elements of success—except the highest. A hundred blameless, laudable characteristics, but the charm and grace and winsomeness, the potency and mighty sway of the early morning—gone! It was to the Church of Ephesus that the message was sent, “I know thy

works, thy toil and patience, but I have somewhat against thee, that thou hast left thy first love." And how can a man, or a Church, recover that? When conscious that he has fallen back on the second best, or the twentieth best, the temptation comes to make a spasmodic effort of his own to regain the highest, to "work up a revival"—a ghastly mockery of the reality which makes spectators shudder, the attempted galvanization of a corpse, the pretended reanimation of a body in which the highest life of all has been allowed to dwindle down or die out.

## II

The remedy is found in St. Paul's words. The injunction "be filled" means that we may, we can, and therefore we ought to play our part. "Ye must be born again" implies that we can be so born, and then a glorious possibility of privilege becomes a sacred duty. The relation between the Divine and the human is not that of an alien supernatural power energizing passive clay into fresh life. That is a heathenish notion of inspiration which would regard the Holy Spirit as a magical, external power which must be invoked in the fashion of the prophets of Baal, who cut themselves with knives to procure the boon of supernatural fire from heaven. The Spirit is here, waiting—oh how He waits! He is unspeakably near to every heart of man—longing, wooing, drawing, striving, filling each soul as far as He can whenever there is room to receive Him, quickening when the faintest movement of response makes it possible for Him to infuse new life; or as a favouring wind to fill the sails of the soul still further, and carry the frail vessel on its forward, homeward way.

But that is not precisely the thought of the text. It is addressed not to mankind at large, but to the Church. It refers not to the vague indefinable Divine Spirit of the Pantheist or the Mystic, but to the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit who is known, loved, understood, and obeyed; the Spirit who originated the new life in the heart of every member, and made each man who is in Christ a new creation; the Spirit who operates in us every moment, though in scanty measure because of our meagre faith and lukewarm love; the Spirit who at every moment—at this moment, waits, longing to raise, inspire, purify, and empower us as He has never done before.

We are directed to find our fulness in Him, and in Him alone. That does not mean the cessation of effort till a Higher Power shall quicken us. Nor does it mean a feverish and anxious occupation in good works and religious ordinances, as if we could kindle loftier affection by sedulous attention to detailed duties. It means that we are to go back to the Fountain-head at once, and always with a directness and immediacy that takes no denial; that every Church and every member is to be in his own place an organ of a Higher Will, intelligently and earnestly co-operating with a Power which informs and sustains and animates the whole. The work that was done at first was not done by us, but by a Higher Power in us and through us; decline begins when men forget this and concentrate attention upon their own efforts. Renewal implies a requickening from the primal source—the love of God in Christ poured abroad in the heart of the Holy Spirit given unto us.

Work out your own salvation, for God worketh in you. Find your fulness in the inspiring Deity. If only by the inspiration of genius can the highest

work be done in literature and art, how much more is inspiration needed in religion ! The truth must possess me, not I it, if it is to accomplish its great end in my message. The Power must use me, not I it, if the best work is to be done. Cromwell said that we never climb so high as when we know not whither we are going. That is because Another is raising us. We are never so mighty as when we hide behind a truth too big for us to master, too lofty for us to compass—when we tremble in the grasp of a Power which possesses us, seizes, sways, and wields us for its own high end. This inspiration is not intended for a few elect seers, but for every Christian. Be filled with the Spirit means, Look for immediate inspiration from on high, yield to it, realize your own highest capacity in and through this power, let all around see and feel its reality. For they know whether that Spirit is at work or not. His work is spontaneous, ours is laboured and futile; His work is free and elastic, ours is toilsome, slavish, and lifeless. His work is various, ours rigid and conventional, bound by routine and prescription; He works from within, welling up outwards, we toil mechanically from without inwards; His work is full of joy, of wonder, simplicity, and gladness, filling the heart with a rare delight which flows abroad into every channel of daily life. And all is to be realized in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Spirit exalts and glorifies. If Christ dwells in the heart of faith, then are we strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inward man. Thus it is that the Church becomes, as Ignatius said in writing later to the same Ephesian Church, a God-bearing, Christ-bearing, Spirit-bearing community — filled with the Holy Ghost.

## III

This principle of closest union between the Divine and the human may be illustrated both from prayer and work. It is usual to draw a distinction between prayer, as emphasizing our dependence upon God, and work, as embodying our own efforts. The distinction has significance, but from a higher point of view it disappears.

Prayer should be both human and Divine, or it will never be effectual. In order to be either aright, it must be both. Prayer is the putting forth of the utmost energy of character in earnest desire, making fullest and strongest demand upon God. It is the absence of this energy of personal character, of will as well as faith and longing, which is the cause of so much feebleness and futility in prayer; the whole man is not behind it, putting forth utmost pressure upon the storehouse of Divine energy. Prayer needs the whole energy of man, but at the same moment his whole nature must be sustained, pervaded, animated by the Divine Spirit, who Himself fills man with His own energy. This is prayer in the Holy Ghost, who helps our infirmity and intercedes for us with groanings which find no words. If we would understand what is meant by being filled with the Spirit, we should think of those comparatively rare moments in the inner life of prayer when the whole energy of our nature was thus exercised, and its very capacity to put forth strength increased by that Divine power within us, enabling us to wrestle with God and to prevail, so that the very kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. The experience of all-conquering prayer is one mode of complying with the injunction of the text.

But the words are not to be understood merely of prayer and ecstasy; if this "fulness" is not realized also in effort, the raptures of inward communion will prove deceptive and misleading. It is the whole man who is to be wholly filled, his intellect wholly illuminated, his heart wholly cheered and comforted, his will wholly steadied and strengthened—not in religious exercises alone, but in the whole life. "Fill every part of me with praise," says the hymn; every part is to be filled with prayer, and praise, and fitness for service, because every part is filled with the Spirit.

The heart that would be Spirit-filled must first be empty. Empty, that is, of everything that would prevent the Spirit from doing His characteristic work. For there is no necessary antagonism between the operation of the Spirit of God and a thousand varied aims for which the Church legitimately strives, a thousand interests in the world which she seeks to promote. Distinguish between a true and a false spirituality. Not by withdrawing the leaven from the mass of meal can the lump be leavened, but by the potency of a ferment mighty enough to quicken the whole. Still it is clear that the Holy Spirit of God cannot fill as He would an already full vessel, and there simply is not room enough for the Spirit to work in some Churches that are calling loudly for His presence, in many hearts that are praying earnestly for His indwelling. Apart from subtle forms of sin, with which we are not now concerned, the pathways of the soul may be blocked, the Divine channel may be obstructed, the soil of the heart choked with a tangle of thorns and weeds, and thus not the entrance, but the plenary work of the Spirit be effectually hindered.

## IV

It is a crucial question for the Churches of to-day, perhaps the question of all others which we should resolutely face in this Assembly. Does the Holy Spirit rule, does His plenary power animate our Church life? Social, literary, political interests have a place in the kingdom of God—most assuredly. But these and a hundred other aims are for the Christian Church means only, not ends, and it is no easy task so to pursue the great supreme End that all secondary and subordinate aims shall be kept in due subjection. There is no commoner cause of declension in Church life than the settling down upon second-best, upon aims that are admissible, or laudable, but are not the highest. May these aims be pursued? Certainly, so many of them as can be raised by indwelling spiritual energy to the highest level and maintained there. But if the End for which the means have been employed should be overlaid, buried, lost sight of, in pursuit of the lower objects, the searching question of Paul needs to be pressed home—Having begun in the Spirit, are ye being perfected in the flesh? It matters not whether the temptation come upon the side of ritual and religious ceremonies, or on the side of philanthropic endeavour to ameliorate the conditions of social life; if the Church seeks first those other things which the Father knows we have need of, she must not complain if the kingdom of God in its purity and power is not added unto her. The Church is planted in the midst of the world, not to do the world's work, but to accomplish the highest purposes of all; if Christ's own followers are not controlled, swayed, dominated, filled to the utmost with

the Spirit of God, what hope is there for the world at large?

It may be asked whether these words are intended to apply to the individual or the community. The answer is, to both; neither aspect must be slighted or ignored. In 1 Corinthians it is sometimes difficult to tell whether the Church or the individual heart is spoken of as the temple of the Holy Ghost. The ambiguity is significant, for the Holy Spirit inhabits both, and He will not fully dwell among men unless both are thus quickened and sanctified. Be filled with the Spirit, each member of the Church, and carry to the assembly the warmth of the fire kindled on thine own hearth. Be filled with the Spirit, in united Church life, for separate flames will not burn long apart, nor will they be able, while single and disjoined, to kindle that great conflagration to which the whole world at last shall be but fuel.

The one is not to wait for the many, nor the many for the one. But it is in the individual heart that God's work for the Church as a whole begins, the single heart alone, with Him alone. In all generations it has been the voice of the solitary inspired prophet that has aroused a slumbering Church and quickened a dying world. What is needed now is a succession of such Spirit-filled men and women, instinct with prophetic fire. The man who stands in the pulpit, cleric or layman, who is sent by God, ought to be a veritable messenger from God; the leader of the society class upon whom others are depending for soul-quickenings or soul-healings; the teacher in class or school, who is called to the sacred task of infusing into young hearts love of the highest. How can these do their work unless Spirit-filled? But those whose work is "secular," no less—

the steward, the treasurer, the trustee—may be filled with the Spirit, whilst the minister, alas! is only touched by the Spirit. The obscure member who has hardly power to pray in public, may be a very organ of the Holy One, whilst the pulpit orator, alas! is thinking of his own eloquence, or the scholar of his superior learning, or the prominent ecclesiastic of his position and influence and the opportunity to secure his own way. Oh, that all the Lord's people were prophets indeed! Every single altar-fire is to be lighted immediately from above. But

“Heaven doth with us, as we with torches do,  
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues  
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike  
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touched,  
But to fine issues.”

Every man in every Church is to make it easier for every other to realize the Divine presence, and to enjoy the plenitude of the Spirit; whereas, in fact, we too often help to shut one another out from the Divine atmosphere and make it hard for others to perceive how near God is. Some Christians lower the spiritual temperature of every society they enter, while others instinctively kindle the decaying embers of religious life wherever they go, as when a dying match is plunged in a jar of oxygen. Let none wait for the rest, and the work will be done. The story has often been told of the Colonel who desired volunteers from his regiment for a dangerous expedition. He addressed his men, and asked any who were willing to go to take a step forward in advance of the rest. After withdrawing for a minute to give the men time to resolve, he turned to find all in line as before. “What, no single volunteer to offer himself?” “Sir, they all stepped forward together!”

## V

A word must be said as to the repeated or continuous "filling" which the present tense here used implies. The process enjoined is not an act, once done and then over. Why? Does it imply something essentially wrong with the constitution of the Church, or in human nature, that this replenishment of the Spirit is an endlessly repeated process, never complete? Nay, the repetition is normal, because we live and grow. A vessel of earth or gold is either full, or not full; and when once filled it remains so. But a living body spends its powers continually, and needs to recoup and renew them. The organism lives and grows by virtue of the action and reaction between it and its environment, its capacity increases with its development, and to spiritual development there is no limit. So far from reproaching ourselves for continually needing to come to God for fresh spiritual supply, we ought to be terribly afraid when we feel no such need. To be satisfied here is fatal. God has an ever-advancing work for His individual servants and His Church; He provides for both an ever-increasing supply of His own life and likeness, and an ever-growing capacity to receive and use it, both being ministered continually by that Spirit who is Himself both Gift and Giver.

Before leaving the subject let us understand that the emphasis lies on the word *fulness*. At every stage, plenitude. The one thing needful in spiritual growth that is at every stage of development existing capacity should be completely filled by Divine supply; the one thing to be guarded against is that half-and-half spirituality which is the despair of Christ and the

delight of the devil. "He that is not with Me," says our Master, "is against Me"; "he that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me"; "I would ye were cold or hot." Nothing great is possible in this life without that white-heat of enthusiasm which makes the world consider the saints mad. Moderatism in the Church is supposed to possess some advantages; Montanism, with its excesses, is open to serious dangers. But Methodism can never hesitate in making her choice. It was for their "enthusiasm" that Methodists were mocked and persecuted at first, and if the lack of scoffs and persecution in later days be due to the loss of enthusiastic devotion, the exchange is a poor one. It was no "inspired cobbler," but a Cambridge professor of sceptical turn, who wrote "No heart is pure that is not passionate, no virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic." Why? Because without the ardent glow of passionate devotion righteousness will never be able to do its work in a world where there is so much green fuel, so little pure flame. Again, we hear the Master's voice—"I am come to send fire on the earth, and oh that it were even now kindled!" So much in the heart of the Christian and in the life of the Church needs to be burned out, and there is so little consuming and cleansing ardour. The fire that will kindle all the whole burnt-offering is the only one that can make it acceptable for the Divine altar, fit to be offered in Divine sacrifice.

"O that in me the sacred fire  
Might now begin to glow,  
Burn up the dross of base desire,  
And make the mountains flow!  
O that it now from heaven might fall,  
And all my sins consume!  
Come, Holy Ghost, for Thee I call,  
Spirit of burning, come!"



## **A SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH**

*“Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”*—1 COR. iii. 16.

“Behold,” said the Prince to Mansoul, ‘my love and care towards you. I have added to all that is past this mercy, to appoint you preachers and the most noble Secretary to teach you in all sublime mysteries. Take heed that you do not grieve this Minister, for if you do, He may fight against you, and that will distress you more than if twelve legions should be sent from my Father’s court to make war upon you.’”—BUNYAN, *Holy War*.

*Come then, my God, mark out thine heir,  
Of heaven a larger earnest give;  
With clearer light Thy witness bear,  
More sensibly within me live;  
Let all my powers Thine entrance feel,  
And deeper stamp Thyself the seal.”*

—C. WESLEY.

“Believe me, count as lost each day that you have not spent in loving God.”—BROTHER LAWRENCE.

## XIII

### A SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH

ABSTRACT generalizations concerning the Holy Spirit remain for the most part in the air, high-sounding, but ineffective; they need to be translated into the language of actual life. How can a truly Spirit-filled Church be realized in the concrete life of to-day? How may the difficulties of present-day Church life be overcome by rendering abstract principles into practice? It is impossible briefly to summarize the answers to these questions, but a few key-words such as these—Holiness, Truth, Power, Love, Joy—would provide us with five Lamps of Spiritual Architecture which can only shine with their true lustre in a Spirit-filled life.

#### I

The side of religion emphasized by the doctrine of the Spirit is personal experience; the kind of experience emphasized is holiness of personal character. The importance of experimental religion is happily appreciated in the opening of the twentieth century, as neither the eighteenth nor the nineteenth understood it. Philosophers and thinkers, as well as Methodist preachers, are now insisting that while creed and worship, ritual and dogma, have their place in religion, experience is the spring and fount of all the rest. But Methodism has her own special testimony to bear on this subject, and we should be rightly

jealous lest with our high traditions we should be found behind other Churches and teachers in impressing our own characteristic doctrines. The witness of the Spirit, direct and indirect, the conscious enjoyment of the love of God in the heart through the Holy Spirit, entire consecration of personal character through the indwelling of the Spirit—these used to be Methodist watchwords: how far are they being sounded forth from Methodist pulpits to-day? Preaching these doctrines does not mean insistence upon mere words, formulæ or phrases that have lost much of their original meaning and power, but upon the truths they represent.

Holiness, for example, we are told, is a word that "has lost its vitality." If so, it needs to be resuscitated. It is not a narrow word, though its noble amplitude has often been narrowed down by those who have used it. The term "saint" will never come by its own till we remember how many types of true sainthood there are, and how often those who have best deserved the name have been men and women least anxious to wear the garb of sanctity in the sight of men, and least recognized on earth as saints. The holiness Christians aim at must be sane, healthy, practical, in closest touch with actual life. Why should the words "brave, true, pure, noble" represent ideals which attract men while the words "holy" and "saintly" repel them? The fully-orbed character which belongs to the Spirit-filled life will shut out the narrow, one-sided, recluse, unreal holiness which has usurped a splendid name. The type which the Church insists on must be pre-eminently ethical. Dr. Dale's name has been associated with a criticism passed on the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century that it was imperfectly ethical. If that be a

fact, the sooner and the more completely evangelical teaching is ethicized, the better. Discredit will necessarily attach to the very name holiness unless the ethical standard maintained by the Church is not only equal to that recognized in the world of morality, but incomparably above and beyond it.

For the highest morality is not holiness. The utmost uprightness of character and conduct will not make a man pure as Christians understand the word, and it is at our peril if we lower the standard to suit the tastes and habits of a moral world around us. One who writes, not as a religious man, but as a high-minded thinker and statesman—Lord Morley, says of holiness, “It is not the same as duty; still less is it the same as religious belief. It is a name for an inner grace of nature, an instinct of the soul, by which the spirit dwells in living, patient, and confident communion with the seen and unseen Good.”<sup>1</sup> This is possible only to the man who is filled with the Spirit of God. Lord Morley speaks of the human spirit as purifying itself and communing not with God, but with abstract goodness. The cleansing we need if this high and rare character is to be realized cannot be attained by man’s own effort; it must be wrought in him from above.

The special testimony of Methodism on this point can only be furnished by fidelity to the spirit of the text. Filled with the Spirit; not showing traces, streaks, of spiritual influence here and there, but the whole man dominated and controlled by the Spirit of God. Entire consecration does not mean sinlessness or faultlessness, but the whole nature with its characteristic imperfections permeated by the one Spirit

<sup>1</sup> The whole passage from Lord Morley’s *Miscellanies* (1908) deserves study. It is more fully quoted in Ch. XV, p. 305.

of holiness. This has been expressed in the homely phrase, "It does not take much of a man to be a Christian, but it takes all there is of him, all the time." That is, it is not his abilities, his gifts, the range of his faculties that matter, though all he has will be pressed into service, but his spirit—which yet is not his, but the Spirit of Christ that dwells in him. What might not the Methodist section of the great Church of Christ be fitted to accomplish if it were a company of men and women wholly filled with the Spirit !

## II

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. Where He is present there is illumination of mind from within, such as no culture from without can ever secure.

"Much heat, little light," has been a reproach cast upon Methodists from the beginning. It was not true of John Wesley. He was as remarkable for the clear, dry light of his intellect as for the fervour of his spirit. Few religious leaders have paid as much attention as he to the conveyance of clear, definite, accurate instruction of the mind. If some of his followers have come short of his standard, that was not his fault. In every religious movement there is danger of mistaking noise for power and excitement for inspiration. Methodists have perhaps had special temptations and been specially prone to err in this direction. But the point I would make for the moment is that the plenary gift of the Holy Spirit implies mental illumination of a special kind, light such as is specially needed for the Church's work to-day.

Love is to abound "in knowledge and all discernment"; the Christian is to be "filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and under-

standing"; the spiritual man "judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man"; those who have "an anointing from the Holy One know all things," for the promised Spirit will guide into all the truth we need to know in the way to eternal life. This truth makes free. The letter kills, the Spirit emancipates. Slavish bondage to the letter is as common as licence and anarchy without it; what is wanted in the intellectual realm of religion to-day is that service of the Spirit which is perfect freedom.

I must not attempt to apply this to vexed questions of modern Biblical criticism, but here is one region in which Methodism, living in the spirit of this text, may render service to Christianity generally. If the best results of modern scholarship are to be rightly appreciated and used; if mistaken traditions of ecclesiastical dogmatism are to be relinquished, without our falling into the vague unbelief of extreme rationalism; if in this generation any restatement—not reconstruction—of time-honoured Christian doctrine is to be undertaken; if in these things there is to be liberty without laxity, authority without bondage, it can only be secured when the Church, and especially its intellectual leaders, are filled with the influence of the ever-living, all-illuminating Spirit, who, amidst dangers, doubts, and difficulties innumerable will not suffer them to stray.

### III

The word Power was from the first associated with the presence and operations of the Spirit. The disciples, before the Church was formed, were to wait till they were endued with power from on high. The effect of Pentecost and subsequent visitations was to

impress friends and foes alike with the spiritual power characteristic of Christians. The whole Church was empowered for service;

- (1) To win men from the kingdom of darkness and evil,
- (2) To establish and carry on a new order, in the kingdom of righteousness.

But especially was this shown in those who spoke, preached, or "prophesied." Christ said that His Spirit should convict the world in respect of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; St. Paul said that when men prophesied in the Church the unbeliever entering in was convicted, was judged, fell on his face and worshipped, declaring that God was among them indeed. And this, not by way of exceptional, miraculous endowment, but in the ordinary worship, because the ordinary worshippers were filled with the Spirit.

What is more needed to-day? The time came in the history of the Church when the "charismatic" ministry passed into the official ministry, and though all power was not lost, its character was largely changed. The danger implied in this change is perennial. It is so easy to learn to rely on oratorical and persuasive will, "enticing words of man's wisdom"; on unimpeachable orthodoxy, the accurate reproduction of the formulæ of faith; on scholarly accuracy, literary finish and the charm of style; or on the very absence of these things, when a man plumes himself on not being cultured, but relies on his power of popular appeal and rough, homely eloquence. All these gifts are valuable, but none of them can confer spiritual power—the power to grip and hold the conscience, to influence the will, to sway the spirit so that it is brought under the influence of the Divine, in change of heart and renewal of life.

No human effort can gain such power; only the Spirit of God can confer it. Conviction of sin can never fully take place except by the Divine Spirit under the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. Hence the importance of the "evangelistic note," and a decay of the sense of sin in proportion as that note is absent from the pulpit. If any in the Church need to be filled with the Spirit, surely those need it most who are commissioned to preach the Gospel. Unction—not unctuousness—what is meant by it, how is it gained? Glow—how far is it present in the preaching of to-day? A thousand other gifts which we rightly prize in the modern Church might be readily relinquished for such a plenitude of the Spirit as would enable God's messengers always to preach with power, "such as may every conscience reach and sound the unbelieving heart."

#### IV

The word Power must not be employed in this connection without the kindred and explanatory word, Love. The Spirit of whom Paul spoke operates in love, or not at all. Love is the first in the list of fruits of the Spirit—first, last, middle—God's command, the Church's joy, the world's simple and effectual test of character. The measure of the claim to be filled with the Spirit of Christ is estimated by the power to receive, enjoy, and manifest love.

We are not called now to distinguish the prismatic colours in this solar spectrum, the rainbow hues into which the single ray of white light may be dispersed. Love to God and love to man; love in the Church and in the world; brotherliness among believers, large-hearted charity for enemies and outcasts; gentleness, kindness, forgiveness, generosity, and all the cluster

of ripe golden fruits growing from this one fertile stem. But may we not learn a lesson in relation to what is called the unity of Christian Churches? The bond which bound the Early Church together was essentially spiritual, "outwardly loose, inwardly firm." This is the precise opposite of the unity which man eulogizes and sets himself to secure—the external uniformity of one organization under pope, or bishop, or presbyter, such as is supposed by some to constitute the true unity of the Church of Christ.

Do we believe that uniformity of creed, of code, of government, of ritual, is the end chiefly to be desired and aimed at, or the keeping of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace? The acceptance of the principle of the text would relegate external considerations to their own important, but entirely subordinate level, in order to concentrate attention on the main question, Do these Christians love one another? Do they care for one another, take interest in others, desire their prosperity, help them so far as they may, and always recognize them as brothers in Christ? If not, what is the use of schemes for external union? If they do, approximation in outward form and order and methods of working will come about easily, sooner or later, as the interests of the work of God demand it.

But the malady of the world—and to some extent of the Church—is cold. The great need, if unity and concord are to be secured among nations or Churches, is that vital heat of ardent care for others which only the Spirit of Christ can adequately supply. The selfishness, isolation, jealousy, and resentment which form the real divisive elements among men in the life of nations and of Churches cannot be banished by orthodoxy, by episcopal government or Methodist Conferences, by ritual or orderly worship, or by any

human power or plan, only by the plenary energy of the indwelling Spirit of God.

## V

It may be thought that Joy hardly deserves a place in this short list of primary forces and excellences. It may be considered as only a state of feeling, personal happiness, desirable, but not fundamental. Yet St. Paul puts it second in his list, and knew what he was doing. The Book of Acts constantly lays stress on the fact that when the Church was filled with the Spirit they were not only of one accord, but were filled with a glad confidence which enabled them to speak and act with the freedom which springs from inward joy. "Joy in the Holy Ghost" is a standing characteristic of early Christianity. "The Holy Spirit is a glad Spirit," says Hermas, "for every glad man does what is good and thinks what is good." Such joy is not a superficial and transient pleasure, but a sign and source of moral and spiritual energy.

Is it disappearing from modern Church life? "Praising, we plough; and singing, we sail," said Clement, in the second century, and the Primitive Church was marked by an exuberance of sacred gladness such as Paul here commends in his reference to psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, the outpouring of a melody which must first exist in the heart in the form of joy. It is not a mere coincidence that associates Methodism with singing; there is a deep psychological reason for that well-known characteristic of our Church life. Renewed life manifests itself in music. As a bird in spring-time, or at the opening day, pours out its gladness in full-throated song, so the renewed heart is the joyful heart, and He who

regenerates the spirit puts a new song into the mouth. But is it possible for the song-bird, or the soul, to "recapture the first fine careless rapture"? Is it possible to keep the heart of the boy in the life of the man, and never to lose the wonder, the simplicity, the buoyant gladness of childhood through the anxieties of maturity and the melancholy of age? In nature, No; in grace, Yes. Senile decay is impossible to those with whom the joy of perpetual youth is an open secret, because they are ever being filled afresh with the Spirit of glory and of God.

It may be said that the picture thus presented is only an ideal—lofty, pure, inspiring, but an unrealizable dream, an unattainable vision. Even if that were true, we should still toil and strive for its attainment. Ideals mould the actual, and the highest and best life we know is found in the endeavour to realize our dreams. "Great is the glory, for the strife is hard." Only by rightly fulfilling each stage of development as it comes can the organism be evolved, the child grow, the man find out what true manhood means. No Christian need miss the privilege—and none can be exempted from the duty—of being filled with the Spirit according to his measure and capacity, passing from one grade and range of life to another, receiving grace for grace, changed from glory to glory, as by the Lord, the Spirit.

But whilst these words represent an ideal, they describe what at each successive period of life-history is gloriously within our reach. The Holy Spirit is God within us, and every Christian man, every Christian Church, may at every step of onward progress realize fulness of spiritual life. Whether we do so or not depends on the measure of our fidelity. We are not straitened in God, but in ourselves. If the Methodist

Churches of to-day are to be worthy of the great opportunities which confront them, attain the spiritual nature which God intends for them, and accomplish all the purposes for which He raised them up, it must be through a mightier influx of power within to meet the strenuous claims continually pressing from without. In vain we look around, or grope within, for the needed energy, it can only come from above. As the traveller in south-eastern France climbed a height from which he was told that he could see the Alps seventy miles away, but looked vainly into the mists gathering from the plains below, till they bade him Look higher! and then far up in the air towered and gleamed the snow-white peaks, so the word comes to us, Lift up your eyes! *Sursum corda*, lift up your hearts! Our eyes are up unto the hills from whence cometh our help. Our help is in the Lord our God, who is not far from every one of us, but who waits to fill the hearts of His people with His Spirit that the whole earth may be filled with His glory. To Him be our ceaseless prayer, to Him shall be our ceaseless praise!



## THE INDWELLING CHRIST

*"Christ in you, the hope of glory; whom we preach."*--  
COL. i. 27, 28.

*"O the wonder of the two blessed unions! In the personal union it pleased God to assume and unite our nature to the Deity. In the spiritual and mystical union it pleases God to unite every believer to the Son of God."*--BISHOP HALL.

*"Deep strike Thy roots, O heavenly Vine,  
Within our earthly sod;  
Most human and yet most Divine,  
The flower of man and God.*

*"O Love! O Life! Our faith and sight  
Thy presence maketh one;  
As through transfigured clouds of white  
We trace the noonday Sun."*

—WHITTIER.

*"Heaven is nothing but the manifestation of the Eternal One, wherein all worketh and willeth in quiet love."*--JACOB BEHMEN.

## XIV

### THE INDWELLING CHRIST

It is the business of the Church to "proclaim Christ," to "preach Christ." What is the meaning of this often used, and often abused, phrase? What did it mean to the Apostles? How has it been understood since? And what is its real significance for us to-day? That is a question we must never weary of asking and answering if Christ is to be for every generation of men a living and a present Saviour.

#### I

In Col. i. St. Paul deals with this subject, and he describes the theme as a "mystery," but he means by the word a message of revealed truth. It is not something dark, inscrutable, unintelligible; not a secret concealed, buried, a treasure hoarded, kept close and meagrely doled out. It is "manifested," and its magnificence dazzles the sight! Hidden from former ages in the past, still unperceived by many, never fully discerned except by prepared eyes, it is now God's good pleasure to make it known. You Colossians, he says, can see and know its surpassing glory, what vast wealth of spiritual treasure there is for you and for all nations in this message—Christ in the midst of you, within your hearts and pervading your lives—the hope of glory, a resplendent blaze of unveiled and all-illuminating light. It enlightens the intellect, doubtless, but it quickens the imagina-

tion, kindles the affections, reinforces the will, and vitalizes the whole nature. If it be true that the only wealth is life, here is riches indeed!

It is my duty, says the great Apostle of the Gentiles, to proclaim this message. It is a great trust, discharged not without pain and cost, as I fill up whatever is lacking in Christ's sufferings, the measure of affliction belonging to the members of the once-suffering Head. But, what is the unspeakable joy of such pain! A revelation has come to me and to you through me, the first glimpse of which intoxicates and bewilders, and as yet it is not wholly seen in order that all may in due time search it out and find its full scope. As when, in the early morning of a glorious summer day, the wreathing mists hide the mountain slopes and cover the valleys beneath, then, under the breath of the freshening wind, gradually lift and open, revealing some giant mountain top lost in the sky or woods and rocks on the hillsides, a ravishing vista of varied landscape, delighting the eyes and stimulating the imagination, showing that what was at first seen was cloud-like appearance only, and making manifest the solid realities and dawning splendours behind and beyond—so a glimpse has been granted to us of the great purpose of God, seen in Christ, but only so far seen as to hint at unimagined reaches beyond—Christ in you, the hope of glory! St. Paul can hardly control his feelings as he approaches this theme. You have watched a smouldering match when plunged into a jar of oxygen burst into bright flame. So, when this messenger of Christ breathes the atmosphere of this Gospel, he flames forth in its celebration—“preached in all creation under heaven, whereof I, Paul, was made a minister!”

There speaks the joy found in the apprehension of a great truth. Have we lost the secret? In youth we

knew that strange beating of the heart, as of some watcher in the skies when a new planet swims into his ken ; has it been left behind with the visions and the glamour of early days ? Has the Church lost the thrill and glow of her earliest years ? God forbid, or never can it proclaim Christ aright. There are always new truths and new aspects of old truths to be discerned, and unless we see them afresh for ourselves with an inexpressible rapture of the heart, our message will lose its characteristic power. In the history of poetry the early period of the nineteenth century has been described as "The Renascence of Wonder" ; is not such new birth needed in theology and in preaching ? If wonder and rapture are lost, quickening power will soon follow. Those who would follow Paul in preaching Christ as in verse 28 must be able to share with him his exultation in the wealth of the glory of the message in verse 27.

On this theme I have, greatly daring, undertaken to speak. I have no claim, fathers and brethren, to address you on this, or any topic, except your friendly and much-esteemed invitation.<sup>1</sup> I certainly do not stand here to instruct, or to exhort, men who know more about this central topic of the Christian religion than the preacher can tell them. It is the vital importance, the urgent need of closely grappling with the subject, that has made me select it. The whole Church of Christ, and the Methodist portion of it in particular, needs to ask itself how this paramount duty and privilege is being discharged amongst the intellectual difficulties and the moral and spiritual temptations of these eager, crowded, and exciting latter days. May the Spirit of Christ be our guide and our inspiration !

<sup>1</sup> This sermon was preached before the United Methodist Conference in Nottingham, July 1910.

## II

The theme is Christ in you, the hope of glory. But we are not to understand that the whole mystery and message are here condensed into half-a-dozen words. One central aspect of truth is chosen and emphasized advisedly; other aspects are not excluded because they are not named. The phrase "*Christ in you*" probably means within, in your hearts; it may simply mean among you, in your midst. In either case it is closely connected with the doctrine of Christ *for us*, in His redeeming work on our behalf, dealt with in verses 20 and 21. The reconciliation through the cross is carried out in order that the meaning of union and communion may be rightly understood and enjoyed. But the link of connection between Christ *for us* and Christ *in us* is a matter of too great importance to be lightly passed by, if "*preaching Christ*" is to be properly understood. They are two parts of one organic whole, and neither element must be under-estimated or over-estimated.

No follower of St. Paul can under-estimate the importance of Christ's work for us, if he would preach the doctrine of Christ *in us*. Verses 13 and 14 show this. A man who is not "*in Christ*" needs to be "*translated*." He is under the power of darkness, and needs to be emancipated from that black bondage before he can enter the Kingdom of the Son of His love. Redemption is necessary—that forgiveness of sins, for which men toil and strive in vain, yet without which they can never be brought into true union with Christ at all.

How can any man be in Christ, or have Christ in him, unless he enter by this door? He holy, spotless, undefiled; we evil and careless, headstrong and dis-

obedient, or hardened and obstinate; stains cleaving even to our best nature, selfishness and unworthiness darkly patent—as fit for intercourse with the Most Holy as a cruel and lustful idolater for a pure and radiant shrine, or as a sot from the gutter to sit down at a marriage feast. The feast is open, and the outcast may come in, but surely he must get ready, and he will not seek to enter without a wedding robe.

Yet, if we listen to the facile ethics of many modern teachers, there is no need of the Cross of Christ except as an example of the way in which men should bear pain and show self-sacrifice. Sin according to them is no real barrier between God and man; or, at least, a word of repentance is enough to remove it. The blot is on the surface, a little water will wash it away; the stain is not deep, and it may quite properly be ignored or forgotten. Any man may not only have Christ in him; he is himself a Christ—so runs the presumptuous phrase—did he but know it. The death upon the cross has no efficacy for his conscience, because his conscience acquits him of sin as an offence against God; it is only a form of selfishness which he will give up, and then all will be well.

Is this the enlightened teaching of specially illuminated men, or does it rather belong to that darkness of which St. John says, If we say that we have no sin, we walk in darkness, we lie, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. A man who can pass muster in a crowd in the twilight may well shrink from being brought out to stand alone, focused in the white blaze of the Divine Holiness. The cross of Christ shows what sin means, what it implies, what it comes to, what it ends in. It shows what is needed if the real significance of sin in human history is to be stamped in upon the conscience, and what is

needed of Divine love in uttermost self-sacrifice if the guilty conscience is to be freed. Rivers of oil and seas of blood cannot wash that foul conscience clean, and a man who presumes to be in true communion with a Holy God, unless his conscience, tender to the least approach of sin, is purged and cleansed, only shows that he has yet to learn the first elements of the Christian religion, and that he has not yet understood the Lord Jesus Christ at all. Are there men preaching Christ to-day who have little or nothing to say of all this and of what Christ has done to make the way into the Holiest open for the worst of sinners? If so, no wonder their preaching is vain.

### III

But these great truths must not be over-estimated as if they were the whole Gospel. This is the door, not the house; the porch, not the abiding home of the soul. Christian in Bunyan is not at the end of his journey when his burden falls away at the Cross; he is disencumbered in order that he may travel. To separate in thought the prepositions "in" and "for" is a serious error, and no one who reads Rom. iii. and vi. together can charge it upon St. Paul. To take "in" without "for" implies a failure to understand the gulf which separates the sinner from God and Christ's method of bridging it. To take "for" without "in" implies a failure to understand the aim and object of Christ's work on our behalf, the attainment of abiding purity in union with Himself. It is to claim the discharge of a debt without understanding the meaning of the ransom, to wish to escape the consequences of wrong-doing without entering the

sharp and cleansing fires of self-destruction and self-devotion. A man who has not learned that to be in Christ is another name for the only salvation which can give him a self worth having has not learned Christ, as truth is in Jesus, and he must go back to first principles again.

Men who preach Christ must burn this in on their own hearts and the hearts of their hearers. You remember St. Paul's bold metaphor in Gal. iv., "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you." Keen pangs of travail are necessary before this marvellous new birth can be accomplished. For it is not the birth of a babe in Christ, but of grown men and women, perfected because Christ Himself is wholly in them and they in Him. The late Bishop King said in a touching letter written to his people just before his death, "I have tried to make you Christ-like Christians." But what wrestling and agony of soul are necessary if that high end is to be attained, especially on the part of a pastor who knows that he is far from being a Christ-like Christian himself! It would make a searching test for many a Christian community to-day to ask, Does it produce Christ-like Christians? They may be orthodox, orderly, harmless, respectable, and respected members of a Christian Church, but in so far as their trust in Christ for them has failed to enable them to enjoy and to manifest Christ *in* them they have missed their way. What scope for the preaching of Christ, to occupants both of pulpit and pew, does the application of this all-searching criterion afford! May it not quicken our sense of the inestimable importance of proclaiming the doctrine of "Christ in you," to remember that that touchstone will be applied to all our work one day?

## IV

But perhaps that is unduly to anticipate. The meaning of this great phrase is as yet most imperfectly realized in Christian life. Christ is within us, if at all, not as an achievement on our part, not as a full and final blessing on His part, but as a beginning, as a potency, as a capacity, as a budding energy. As a great yearning, with the prospect—and much more than the prospect, the assurance—of ultimate attainment. This is implied by the phrase “the hope of glory,” *i. e.* the potentiality of glory, with the confident expectation of its realization.

Glory is manifested excellence; light shining, not so much from without as lit up from within. It means inherent brightness, recognized, radiant, resplendent. Perhaps hardly enough stress is laid on this aspect of the indwelling Christ, either in the theology or the religion of the day. The doctrine contained in it proceeds upon the basis that religion for the Christian man is germinal and germinating; that, while we cannot fully understand the beginning or the course of the Christian life without seeing the end, it is as yet quite impossible that we should see the end. Hence Christ in the individual heart, Christ in the Church’s life, Christ in the nation’s life, is at present to be viewed mainly as a great possibility. This is not, of course, to deny the glory of the reality already within reach, but to set it in its right relation to a larger whole.

That larger whole—men must ever keep it in view if they would rightly preach Christ. His kingdom and work among men are an unfinished symphony, music of which the structure and composition may in the main be understood and enjoyed, but only

certain movements are as yet complete. For the rest look onward and forward. Some bars of the melody float from the harp, some notes of the great chord upon the organ may be heard, but they suggest infinitely more yet to come. Of that we dream and hope, but as men who already possess such security for the complete fulfilment, the "restitution of all things," that for its coming we are content to wait.

## V

But what a theme to preach! "The key to the riddle of the world is God, the key to the riddle of God is Christ." That is what St. Paul means when he says (ii. 2) that "the mystery of God"—the key to the open secret which tells all we need to know about God—"is Christ."

"I say the acknowledgment of God in Christ,  
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee  
All problems in this earth and out of it,  
And hath so far advanced thee to be wise."

Solves all problems? Perhaps not, in the way expected, but it answers some questions outright, shows the direction in which the solution of other problems lies, and leaves us content that the rest should remain unanswered for a while. The assured ideals are to be realized, but they are His, not ours, and His is the way by which the great goal is to be attained.

It is impossible to linger over and illustrate a theme when the bare statement of it is fraught with such far suggestions. It runs thus—

The fact of Christ in history—that such a Man ever was, that the God-Man lived, taught, suffered, died, and rose again as He did;

The fact of Christ in experience—that the Lord Jesus Christ has done for me, and for millions,

that of which I can testify as a new creation, life from the dead;

warrant unspeakably glorious conclusions for

My own, your own, individual life: the character that is being formed, the spirit that is being fashioned, even the body, the vehicle of the spirit, and all the relationships into which your and my individual life will enter;

The Church, which is the Lamb's wife, whom He has loved and will cherish, having given Himself up for it till His work for it is fully wrought, and it is made a glorious Church without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

The world, for which the Church is to live, and toil, and suffer, as Christ has lived and suffered for her; till the love wherewith the Father has loved the Son is in them, and Christ in them, and the music of the symphony, finished at last, pours from the lips of the multitude of the redeemed on high.

What a theme to preach! We cannot live, or breathe, without these far horizons. "'Tis not what man does that exalts him, but what man would do!" That may or may not be true; but it is quite certain that it is not what Christ has already accomplished for the sons of men which shows His highest exaltation, but what He will do, when that which hinders is taken out of the way and all His full designs are accomplished.

Christ is our hope as well as our trust, and our love, and our Lord, and our Life of lives. The hope of the Gospel is an integral part of the Gospel. The dignity of man? We see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus; manhood as yet is crowned in Him alone. St. Paul looked out at the dawn of the new day of Christendom, and his heart throbbed high

within him, when Christ had been preached among men for only thirty years, because he saw Christ among the nations as already the firstfruits of a great harvest. We live in a later day, when two thousand years of the Christian Church have brought about triumphs of which no one then could dream. But they have also brought disappointments, and these prevail in the thoughts of many to-day. They sing with dolour, "The world is very evil, the times are waxing late," iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. This is not the note for a Christian of any age. A man who would preach Christ fully must understand that the Christ that is in the hearts of believers is but a faint foreshadowing of the Christ that is to be. He must hear already the bells ringing out the old, ringing in the new, though well he knows that the fulness of the new glory is not yet. He must be among those who—

"Rowing hard against the stream,  
See all the gates of Eden gleam,  
And do not dream it is a dream."

Nay, are certain that it is not a dream, for the glory of the End illumines both the beginning and the course of the kingdom of God upon earth. The End is coming when He shall have put down all rule and authority and power, when the Son Himself shall be subject to Him that subjected all things unto Him, that God may be all in all. A vision as dazzling in prospect as it is certain of realization by one who has learned the meaning of the words, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

## VI

Is not this a Gospel, if indeed it be true? What is to be done with it? Believe it first, obey it second, and proclaim it always. Some believe without

proclaiming; whilst, in listening to some speakers, one would think that they proclaim without believing. A large number of so-called Christians in this land neither believe nor proclaim; for if every one in the Church of Christ did both, the world would soon be converted.

The word "preach" suggests a pulpit and one particular kind of announcement by a duly-appointed person. That kind of promulgation should not be disparaged; a preacher of the Gospel may well magnify his office. The word "preach" is not in good odour with the world. "Defamed by every charlatan, and soiled with all ignoble use," it still remains supreme in its own order, and there is no lever for turning the world right side up like the Lord's own ordinance of preaching. All that is needed is that the preacher should illustrate more fully in his utterances what the Lord meant when He sent forth His first messengers to preach the Gospel. The word "proclaim" suggests a wider area, a more resonant voice, a more general and effective declaration, not on the part of a professional advocate, but of the Church as a whole. *Καταγγέλλειν* includes three ideas—to publish, to celebrate, to commend; in other words, it implies something given, the speaker's delight in singing the praises of his message and his earnest commendation of his theme as needed by all and sufficient for all their needs. These were realized together in early Christian community, described in 1 Thess. i. 8, "From you hath sounded forth as from a trumpet the word of the Lord . . . so that we need not to speak anything." We need to hear the echoes of that trumpet voice in the Churches of to-day.

Think of the Apostolic preaching. The Apostles did not argue, though they could reason with cogency,

if necessary; they did not denounce, they did not discuss, they did not declaim. They brought a message in which they trusted as for life itself and for all that made life worth having, and that message they spread abroad by every means in their power. "As it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken, we also believe and therefore speak."

The Apostle was not a Rabbi, or a learned commentator, with saws and maxims, traditions and precedents, authorities carefully cited, and modern parallels ingeniously drawn—we can hear Rabbis and read commentators enough to-day. The Apostle was not a Critic, with his abstract rationalistic processes, his purely intellectual tests, his microscopical examination of details, his hair's-breadth distinctions and discrepancies—combined with a strange tendency to miss the broad features patent to the naked eye with no microscope to aid it—we can find critics in abundance when we want them. The Apostle was not an Apologist, who has a whole armoury of carefully furbished arguments, who declares that he is free from bias and pursues a neutral inquiry, ready to prove to every candid mind what must certainly be accepted as most reasonable, if meanwhile the audience have not melted away. In the twentieth century an apologist may be engaged any day if he is needed. And I for one am far from hinting that commentator, critic, and apologist are utterly useless. Preachers cannot possibly dispense with their aid. Every one of them may do admirable work in his own time and place.

The preacher has another task. What the Church wants, and the world must have, is proclaiming and preaching Christ. Burning words from men whom zeal for Christ has eaten up, and who have found their true vocation in commending to others what they have

found, and abundantly proved, for themselves. The occupant of the pulpit, in the first instance, is to be and do what every Christian in his measure is to be and do in proclaiming Christ, and the result will depend upon the way in which the pulpit leads the pew and the pew follows and reinforces the pulpit.

How much of the true religious zeal, which fires until it consumes, is found to-day in the Christian Church? "Preach the Gospel and put down enthusiasm," said an Archbishop of Canterbury in his charge to a Bishop of Calcutta when he was going out to India. What a combination of ideas! A Confucianist will commit to memory I know not how many thousand characters representing many tens of thousands of words of his Chinese classics; a Buddhist is content to be absorbed for half a lifetime in profound meditation on the "Way" which leads to deliverance of the soul; many a Mohammedan can repeat the whole Koran; he will allow nothing to interfere with his five prayer-hours each day, and is found proselytizing in the interior of Africa with fanatical intensity. Theirs may be zeal without knowledge, but knowledge without zeal will never convert the world. Christians may well ask themselves how many out of the four million sermons preached on Sundays alone in this country in the course of the year are the outpouring of souls penetrated through and through with the glory of a message that has saved the preacher and can save every child of man. If the Christian does not believe, or does not think, or does not know, or does not care, he will not preach. And if he does not preach the hope of the world is gone, for how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have

not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they be sent?

The Queen of the South came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, though Solomon could only speak of the cedar of Lebanon and the hyssop on the wall, of the words of the wise and their dark sayings. Men are eager now for scientific knowledge; they scorn delights and live laborious days, to learn the truths of science, the story of organisms and their development, of atoms and molecules, of the strata of the rocks, and the orbits of the stars. But surely a greater than Solomon, a greater than the man of science who is deservedly counted great, is here. Where is the corresponding fervour of proclamation in those to whom is committed the message, Christ in you, the hope of glory? Methodism is said to be Christianity in earnest, Methodist preachers are supposed to be ordinary preachers on fire. A sapless, savourless preacher does discredit to his Master, to his message, and himself. Let him take heed that at last the very blood of his hearers is not required of the unfaithful watchman's hand.

## VII

We may kindle waning lamps again at that "thrice Holy Fount, celestial fire," as we are reminded of the great Subject of Christian preaching. The mode of proclamation depends upon the subject. Some theses have to be argued out, some traditions must be explained, some propositions must be criticized. But the theme of the Christian preacher is a Person—WHOM we preach. In other words, the subject of proclamation is

Not a theology. How important, how essential, a theology is in its own place, I need hardly say. Connected and ordered thought upon the highest subjects that can occupy the mind of man, surely every one values. How can a teacher possibly dispense with clearly and steadfastly ordered thought in the background of his mind when he speaks? But a preacher of Christ does not preach theology.

Not a moral code. Laws and principles for conduct are as necessary as well-ordered thought for the mind, perhaps more so. In a world where so little is to be known, so much is to be done, and so little time is given to do it in, careful instruction as to duty and the conduct of life can never be absent from Christian teaching. But to preach Christ does not mean to repeat the Sermon on the Mount, or any modern ethical code based upon it.

Not the performance of any ritual, the compliance with any ceremonies, however beautiful or helpful to the spiritual life. Worship is, or should be, a home of the soul, and all symbols which aid imagination and support faith are invaluable in a world where the seen easily dominates the unseen, and the temporal rapidly ousts the eternal from the mind. But no ceremonies or sacraments, no observances well-pleasing to God, helpful to ourselves, or impressive to others, are ends in themselves. They are at best means to a higher end, and sometimes prove obstacles rather than aids to the life of the spirit. A preacher is not a priest, but a prophet, and it is at his peril that he substitutes the performance of a rite for the quickening word of inspired truth.

Not social reformation and philanthropic enterprise,

deeply interested as every Christian must be in the promotion of such efforts. These follow, not precede; they are fruits, not roots; they prove adequate and permanent only as they spring from a preliminary work which it is the business of the preacher of Christ to carry out in his Master's name.

The theme of Christian preaching is a Person, and for us "persons" nothing is so lofty, so quickening, so fruitful as personal life. Philosophy, science, art, literature are all excellent, but that which comes right home to the heart of every man, which satisfies the varied needs of all men, and remains an inexhaustible fount of suggestion and inspiration when other streams run dry, is a living Person, provided he have in himself the fulness of supply necessary. In this case it is the Jesus of history who is the Christ of experience; neither without the other. The facts of history, together with an interpretation of them, which have resulted in that moulding of heart and life which we call Christian experience; and the Lord Jesus Christ as the sum and centre of the whole. The facts which unfold the mind and heart and will of God; the facts which prove the possibilities and potencies of the spirit of man, when swayed and controlled by a Divine revelation. But a revelation, not contained in a formula, not to be expressed in a creed, finding its full expression only in a living Saviour. Christ not as Teacher, not as Pattern, not as Ideal, but as *Saviour*; One who once did a great work for man, and who continually carries on and carries out that same work of redemption in man. He it was whom the Apostles preached, and whom the followers of the Apostles must proclaim to-day.

There are so many Christs. There is the romantic Christ, the mystic Christ, the rationalistic Christ, the socialist Christ; there is the Gallic Christ in Renan, the Germanic Christ from Reimarus to Wrede, the Hellenic Christ of the fourth century, the Byzantine Christ of the seventh century, and the Archetypal man of the twentieth century. It is the Christ of the New Testament whom we preach. Not the Christ of the three Synoptic Gospels, or of the Gospel of Mark as the first of the three, or of such portion of Mark as the modern critic may vouchsafe to accept; not the Christ of Paul, or of John, or of Stephen, or of Peter, though all these are inexpressibly precious—

“They are but broken lights of Thee,  
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.”

It is the whole Christ of the whole New Testament, a once suffering, now glorious risen and living Lord, whom, having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

It is not the Christ-Idea that we preach—an abstract thought in the mind; not the Christ-Principle, an operating thought in the life. Both these flow from the Christ-Person. Theodore Parker said that he could accept the teaching of Jesus as well if it came from a Catiline or a Borgia, showing that he understood neither the sacred Speaker nor His words. It is not true that we can be saved by the idea of God stooping to help man, or the principle of self-sacrifice, “Die to live.” It is the Saviour who has wrought a great work for us on the cross, who is now the living conquering Spirit in the hearts of all His followers, whom we preach, and none else will suffice.

“None other Lamb, none other Name,  
None other hope in heaven or earth or sea,  
None other hiding-place from guilt and shame,  
None beside Thee.”

But to proclaim this Person implies much more than believing in Him; it implies a belief that in this message is all that the world needs. Three things that were central with St. Paul were being denied at Colossæ, and it is to be feared they are still far from being accepted in many a Christian country.

First, the complete sufficiency of Christ and Christianity for all the spiritual requirements of the individual man.

Second, the universality of His scope and mission, the inclusion of all races, varieties, and types of men, so as to shut out all rivals, all alternatives, all supplementary helpers and saviours.

Third, the finality of the religion thus established, so that men can never get beyond it, can never exhaust its significance, never need imagine it superseded or obsolete.

## VIII

St. Paul asserted all these claims most vigorously at the outset, and the experience of the intervening centuries has confirmed the claim. The capacities of the Christian religion, so far from being exhausted, are only beginning to be understood. It is still so far in front of the standards, as well as the attainments, of humanity that one of the chief complaints concerning Christianity is that it is too good to be true, and too lofty to be put in practice. As Max Müller said, we seem to be living two thousand years B.C., rather than A.D., so far are we from having made

the teaching of Christ, and the example of Christ, and the salvation of Christ, fully our own.

The greater need of true preachers. If, that is, preachers are of the right kind and can rise to the height of this great argument, proving themselves adequate to the lofty scope of the message they carry. The only answer to the often-suggested question whether the power of the pulpit is diminished is that of the old Scotchwoman, "It depends on wha's in it." The one thing that never can be admitted is that the man who seeks to fulfil this one aim of preaching Christ has a narrow, meagre, one-sided, insufficient subject to expound. Narrow? There is not one preacher in ten thousand who is himself broad enough to understand the true length and breadth and height and depth of this theme. All heaven and earth is in it, all human life, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, sins and remedies, failures and capacities—"all, all I want is there." Nothing is commoner than the use of that phrase, nothing rarer than the power to prove it true. And the standing problem for the preacher is how he may get nearer and nearer to this power, so that every hearer of his shall be made to feel the all-sufficiency of the one message for his own needs, which, as he truly thinks, are in themselves infinite. St. Paul, in the opening of 1 Corinthians, propounded the one theme of his preaching in terms which might seem to forecast a narrowly restricted, rather than a generously comprehensive ministry—nothing else but Christ and Him crucified. Yet before he has finished this one Epistle he has soared to the heights of Divine wisdom in chapter ii., he has dealt in fullest detail with social problems at Corinth in chapter vii., he has laid down far-reaching principles of Christian giving in chapter ix., has sung an immortal hymn of love in

chapter xiii., has shown the value of gifts and graces in chapters xii. and xiv., has penned lines of comfort and inspiration in chapter xv. that have solaced mourners and relieved doubters for centuries—yet all this has sprung with gracious and golden ease from the simple creed propounded in it—“How that Christ died for our sins and rose again according to the Scriptures.”

It is true that St. Paul was an inspired Apostle, and we are but rank and file men in the great company of preachers. But the theme is the same, an enrichment of its detailed application has been going on for centuries in the history of Christendom, the Holy Spirit who guides and quickens is the same, and His operations are wider and more diverse than in the first century; therefore why should the preacher of to-day fail or despair? All that is necessary is that he should be among those “to whom God is pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations,” the eyes of their hearts being enlightened that they may know what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and have the power to expound what they know. If men will turn from the centre to the circumference, from the infinitely great to the infinitely little, from the glory of the Gospel to their own ingenuities concerning events whose interest lasts as long as the posters on the walls that advertise them, they know what to expect. Recently there might be found among the announcements in one town of sermons preached on a single Sunday—“God and the Trees,” “Immigration and Nationality,” “The Wonders of Memory,” “Does a man’s social position give him moral absolution?” while at other churches a sacred concert was to be given on Sunday evening instead of a sermon. A man

may give up the organ for a penny whistle, because he finds the latter easier to play. But if preachers and people are full of the organ-music of "Christ in you, the hope of glory," and adequately proclaim that one theme in all its richness and variety, they will never be tempted to leave it, and they may be quite sure the world will listen and follow the immortal strain.

## IX

St. Paul adds the clauses, "Admonishing every man, teaching every man, that every man may become perfect by union with Christ." Surely, if any lingering doubt existed as to the richness and comprehensiveness of the one theme, these closing phrases would dissipate it.

"Warning every man" means urging "none but this"; plying due admonitions that no alternative be admitted to the one Saviour, no adulterations be tolerated of the truth as it is in Jesus. The exhortation, "Neither is there salvation in any other," given within a few days of Pentecost, has been needed in the Church and round the Church ever since. What is it that saves men? Let the preacher always see that the answer to that question is made plain in his proclamation, and that he warns men not to be satisfied without it. Many topics will comfort men, soothe them, interest them, stimulate them, or perhaps lull them into a welcome slumber. They need to be *saved*, and that is radical work, strenuous work, terribly searching and testing work. He who preaches Christ must not blunt the sharp edge of truth, must not rake with the teeth upwards. He is probably not doing his duty if some do not wince and shrink from his teaching; perhaps

openly complain and rebel. It is no kindness to preach without an element of warning, and some of the feebleness, not to say flabbiness, of current Christianity may be ascribed to the fact that preachers too seldom warn men, or seem conscious that there is anything very dangerous to warn them against.

“Teaching in all wisdom” reminds us how many are the grades in the school of Christ, how great is the difference between the infant class and the sixth form, how many are the subjects taught, and how manifold are their applications to the complex life of man. If any man who sets out to preach Christ thinks that he is limited to the A B C of religion, the sooner he corrects his mistake the better. That some are still occupied with the alphabet may be very true, but it is their own fault. The Gospel is milk for babes, but it is also strong meat for grown men, too strong for the spiritual digestion of many weaklings. There is danger of lingering over the primer and words of one syllable, because the higher stages of knowledge need effort. It is possible for Christian teachers to run in smooth and easy grooves, worn so as to fit their own wheels, in a kind of mill-horse round of doctrine which knows of no real progress. But that is not the fault of the Gospel. A few lines further on in this Epistle we read, “In Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden.” The true preacher is the man who has found some of those treasures and who knows where the rest lie in their rocky bed, who can bring out of his treasure-house things new and old, and guide his people to search and find for themselves. But let no man say whose duty is to teach himself and others “in all wisdom” in Christ, that he has too narrow a field for his energies, too restricted a scope for his powers. If he exhaust an infinitesimal fraction

of it in a lifetime he will find enough to make himself and those who hear him rich for ever.

“That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” reminds us that the Christian teacher is not concerned with speculative doctrine, but with truth of so vital and practical a kind that the end of all is the shaping of character. Not the shaping of outward conduct only, that does not go deep enough. It is the man that is to be perfected, not one faculty or one department of human nature, but Christian manhood as such. The Church is not to turn out specialists—men clever enough to shape a pin-head, but unable to sharpen a pin-point—not mere thinkers, or mere practical men, but each man fully fashioned for all that becomes a man, in virtue of his union with the Lord Jesus Christ, the One Perfect Man and Perfecter of all men. We may admit that it is a fair test of a Church whether it turns out saints, provided the term saint be used in its own glorious breadth and height. The end of all proclaiming Christ is to fashion fully-formed Christians, not unworthy of Him whose name they bear. And it is an end for which every Christian may gladly toil through a lifetime, or a thousand lifetimes if he had them.

Toil is needed. St. Paul is not likely to forget that. He does not, however, here exhort others to expend their powers, but says most suggestively that he finds the need of putting forth all his own—as in verse 29, “I labour and agonize.” Everything worth having and worth doing in this world needs to be toiled after. The reason is obvious, for it is the toiling and striving, as well as the possessing, which helps to make the man. But the toil and strife, which would be as futile as they are painful, if Paul or any man were left to toil alone, prove delightful and triumphant

because the measure of them is another Power, "which worketh in me mightily." "According to the power" means that the precise proportion of true work to this end which I put forth is measured by the proportion of the indwelling might of God which I appropriate and use. "Live mightily," said John Foster; of no one should this be more true than of the man who attempts to preach Christ. And the only security for the fulfilment of so lofty and so exacting a precept is the welling up within us of the exceeding greatness of the might of His power. Who is sufficient for these things? Our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, according to the working of that power whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.



## THE HIDDEN LIFE

*“Your life is hid with Christ in God.”—COL. iii. 3.*

*“We must therefore invoke God Himsclf, not with external speech, but with the soul itself . . . when we approach by ourselves alone to the Alone.”—PLOTINUS.*

*“There is in God, some say—  
A deep, but dazzling darkness; as men here  
Say it is late and dusky, because they  
See not all clear.  
O for that Night! where I with Him  
Might live invisible and dim!”*

—H. VAUGHAN.

## XV

### THE HIDDEN LIFE<sup>1</sup>

IT is well that the meetings of a busy week should close with devotion. The melody should end upon the keynote. Whilst devotion has never been absent from the gatherings of this Council, we remind one another in this closing session that whilst we may be lawfully careful about many things, yet one thing is needful.

That means that we emphasize in this hour the cultivation of the Inner Life. By this it is not intended to laud a life of contemplation as distinguished from a life of activity, or some particular type of "saintliness" which is to prevail over all others. Cultivation of the Inner Life means that whatever duties we are called on to fulfil—in the study, in the pastorate, in business, politics, or society—whatever be our temperament and type of individual service, there is for each of us an inner central chamber of the heart which contains the ruling, guiding, driving power of the whole; and that, whilst health and soundness of every part of our nature is important, here is the spring, the source and the inspiration of all the rest. The condition of this Inner Life is the question of questions for every man.

Is sufficient attention paid to it? No fear need be entertained as to the interest of more concrete and

<sup>1</sup> An address delivered at the Free Church Council held in Swansea, March 1909.

exciting topics. An ecclesiastical council is sure of a crowd when social, political, and some theological questions are being discussed. But many shrink from any reference to the deepest themes of all, as if upon these the less said the better. It is not well that the Church should countenance the habit of the world and agree to shelve the things that matter most.

## I

This innermost life is the one reality. Poets and philosophers teach this in their own way. Maeterlinck tells us of the threshold of "the third enclosure," behind which is the life of life. Browning, in his "Death in the Desert," expounds the doctrine of the three souls in man which—in ascending order of importance—make up one soul: "What Does, what Knows, what *Is*, three souls, one man." M. Arnold has written words about the "Buried Life" which can never be forgotten by those who know them, as he tells of those rare moments when a "bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast, the eye sinks inward and the heart lies plain, and what we mean we say, and what we would, we know." Carlyle, in a well-known passage, declares: "Not what I have, but what I do is my kingdom." That is hardly true. Not what I have is my kingdom; we have learned that a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things that he possesses. Not what I know is my kingdom, so soon does knowledge become antiquated and obsolete; not what I say—in words always inadequate and often unreal—is my kingdom; nor even in what I do, so little can I accomplish of what I would fain achieve, and my reach so far exceeds my grasp. No; what *I am* is my kingdom; and then the ques-

tion presses, What am I? We turn from philosophy and poetry to religion, and especially to the Christian religion, and we are reminded of the "inward man," the "hidden man of the heart," and hear the memorable words, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." That life is the one thing that counts for each one of us, and that alone.

Grant at once that it is in and through the outward that the inward is realized; there must be no false antithesis. What we know streams in and helps to make us what we are; what we are streams out in what we do and is modified by it; what we say, and even what we have, are elements in character of great importance. Still it is the fashioning of the man, the inmost individual being, that determines all the rest, and in our days the close study of this side of religion is at a discount. It is disparaged by some as Quietism, Mysticism, Individualism, and these names are supposed to be synonymous with the unpractical, the ineffective, the selfish. Doubtless differences of opinion that appear among Christians on this matter are not so deep-seated as might be thought; the question is not one of principle, but of precedence, of emphasis. Every Christian believes that the inner life must be manifested in the outward, and that external activities cannot be rightly maintained without purity and power in the inward springs of life. It may be open to question whether, at this moment, stress needs chiefly to be laid upon the inward or the outward aspect of Christian life and character, though to my own mind the signs of the times are patent enough. Of the supreme value of the Hidden Life there can be no doubt whatever.

## II

What has been occupying the attention of the Council during the last few days? Theological questions have arisen, religious unrest has been admitted, and we have been reminded of the paramount importance of Christian experience as evidence and the ground of ultimate appeal. What experience? Where is it, who has it, how much does it amount to, and what weight of argument will it bear? Churches that appeal to experience must possess a rich inner life of their own behind their words, or they will appeal in vain.

Church organization has been much in evidence in our discussions. Or if Congregationalists and Baptists disclaim the use of a word which applies more properly to the highly organized Presbyterian and Methodist communities, the multitudinous meetings and activities of all Churches point the same lesson. Whence comes the driving power that keeps all this machinery going? Is it adequate to the task? Is it entirely Christian? Without any lack of charity it may be said of much ecclesiastical business that there is in it little that is distinctively Christian. Non-Christian, or even anti-Christian, considerations too readily rush in to fill up a deficiency of Christ-constrained spiritual energy. And serious doubt has arisen in many minds of late whether the spiritual force of the Churches behind all these manifold activities is keeping pace with the demand made upon it, and the work it is called on to accomplish. It is not a question as to whether a Christian man should take his part in social and political life; every Church member should discharge these duties according to

the measure of his capacities and opportunities. But if he does so, it must be as a Christian. His own inward life must be mighty enough to enable his Christianity to prevail, so that his influence and action may be distinguished from those of the mere politician and philanthropist. A Christian is called on to promote the advancement of the kingdom of God, not the mere amelioration of the kingdoms of this world. The two aims may to some degree overlap, but if the distinctively Christian element is to prevail, the tides of spiritual life within the Churches and their individual members must be potent, adequate, irresistible.

Cultivation of the hidden life is necessary if it is to flourish. Our fathers understood by cultivation, the practice of earnest prayer, reverent study of the Bible and devotional books, with meditation and endeavour to make their own by faith the life that is hid with Christ in God. Their fathers before them for nearly two thousand years used similar methods. Have we outgrown them? Are these amongst the old-fashioned ways which we style "early Victorian," and, confident in our maturity, are prepared to leave behind us? The Bible—is it read, known, loved, thought and prayed and wrestled over till its deepest religious teaching is afresh assimilated? The chief interest excited concerning it to-day is aroused by criticism, which in some directions is doing excellent service. But the Bible is essentially a book of religion, not a collection of literary documents. There is a time and place for examination into the details of its composition, but it is as food for the hidden man of the heart that it is all-important, and it is a question whether the coming generation in any stratum of society knows the Bible well or appreciates its value for the world.

Every Christian prays; but how? One who would know the hidden world of prayer must be a familiar denizen of it; hasty and occasional visits will teach him nothing. Whilst Sir Oliver Lodge is urging the power in the spiritual world of filial communion and those aspirations and petitions which "exert an influence far beyond their conscious range," some Christians, who ought to know better, plead that work is worship, and that social reform is of more importance than "pietistic communings." These things, therefore, ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Besides, the life of prayer—itself a lofty and arduous experience—is only a means to an end, the rooting and grounding of personal life in God Himself, God revealed in Christ and indwelling by the Holy Spirit. It is the health, the vigour, the abundance of that life in individuals and Churches which is the test of real prosperity, as it is the spring of all external influence and power. Prayer has its grades, steps upon the pathway stretching towards "the shining tablelands to which our God Himself is moon and sun." Teresa, following earlier mystics, compared the four stages of advancement in prayer to (1) the toilsome drawing of water from the well; (2) receiving it from a revolving wheel; (3) opening the sluice of a running stream; and (4) drinking in of the spontaneous rain from heaven. In the first stage the labour of our own effort to gain a blessing is felt, and little else. At the next, the toil of the soul is relieved by the grace of God; at the third stage, grace does most of the work, though effort is perceptible; whilst at the last, the highest and best, the soul is bathed as in a Divine atmosphere, and its strength renewed without any beating and striving

of the soul's wings, any labour of spiritual ascent. Prayer is a means to an end, but of many travellers on the road too few reach the goal. Tennyson calls it "that mystery where God-in-man is one with man-in-God," and its life is maintained by the alternate systole and diastole of the devout heart—contracting in eager, active, human aspiration, and dilating to receive the sustaining and vitalizing influence of grace. But the end of communion is union. Not absorption, not passivity, not the loss or diminution of personal life or power, but its interpenetration and transformation by the Divine indwelling.

In modern psychology the unit of conscious life is not thought alone, or feeling alone, or will alone, but all three in movement, the will being primal in personal life. Another well-known feature of modern psychological teaching, though surrounded as yet with some obscurity, is the existence of a subliminal consciousness, or a sub-conscious self as constituting a kind of raw material of character, gradually shaped and fashioned, as in the course of experience it emerges in conscious activity. If these lines of thought are followed, they suggest a large and various field for prayer. Prayer implies an effort of will to bring the whole nature within the operation of the Divine Spirit, an energizing of the whole nature for the attainment of the soul's highest desires. But in Christian prayer stress is laid upon the operation of the Spirit of God, not only from above, raising and purifying the human spirit, but from beneath in the depths of the soul behind consciousness, as He helps our infirmities and pleads for us in yearnings that can find no words. The truest prayer is "in the Holy Ghost."

This is hard work. Here, as in every department

of life, achievement is proportioned to energy. Whether the phraseology of James v. 16 means that the prayer of the righteous man is "inwrought" by the Spirit or itself "works effectually" to a high end may be debated; prayer can only avail much in proportion as it is both energized and energizing. It is the psychologist William James, not a preacher, who describes this energy—"the conscious person as continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come," our small wheel being "linked up with the Power House of the universe." The metaphor is mechanical, but the philosopher, though he hesitates to use the name God, holds that this "positive content of religious experience is literally and objectively true as far as it goes." Men and women in the twentieth century do not spend their six hours out of the twenty-four in prayer, as Catherine of Genoa did, or five, as was the custom of Bishop Andrewes; some are well satisfied with five minutes. It is not a question of length of time, but of the energy of the soul—desire of heart, concentration of mind, strenuous exertion of the will—and the extent to which all the powers of man are thrown into active co-operation with the will of God. Here is the secret fount of that life which is hid with Christ in God, the source and spring and strength of all the rest.

### III

The effect upon outward life of this nourishment of inward springs is manifest. The manifold activities of many good people are not the steady outflow of a fully formed character; they rather represent jets and

spurts of irregular energy and are correspondingly uninfluential and ineffective. The restlessness of fragmentary efforts and piecemeal enterprises produces an altogether different impression from the steadfast maintenance in all relationships of one course, determined by the flow of one spirit. Such a life can only be fed and fashioned by the continuous indwelling of the Divine Spirit, and this higher note is not characteristic of the average Church life of to-day. In an impressive passage in his recently published *Miscellanies*, Lord Morley says: "By holiness do we not mean something different from virtue? It is not the same as duty, as religious belief. Holiness is the name for an inner grace of nature, an instinct of the soul, by which, though knowing of earthly appetites and worldly passions, the spirit, purifying itself from these and independent of all reason, arguments, and fierce struggles of the will, dwells in living, patient, and confident communion with the seen and unseen good."

"But," adds the writer, with a certain pathos of his own, "we are being drawn into matters too high for us." He will not use the name of God, still less the word Christ, but that which Lord Morley describes is, as he acknowledges, the atmosphere of the saint, not the philosopher, of the *Imitatio*, not the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Flowers spring from hidden seed, no ingenious machinery can produce them. The simplicity and spontaneousness, the fragrance and charm of such spiritual blossoms can only be attained without effort by Christians, the roots of whose hidden life strike deep in no earthly soil; the fruit of the Spirit grows only in the garden of God.

For the Christian, the Cross is the key to all the open secrets of the hidden life. St. Paul makes this

clear when he says, "Ye died, and your (real) life is hidden." The word "died" is a strong one, far too strong for the prevailing habit of mind to-day, too strong for any except those who understand what a foe sin is, and that the warfare with such an adversary is one of life and death. Moralists of the twentieth century deprecate violence, and would have men begin gradually and go forward gently in the process of reducing the amount of evil in the heart and in the world, for after all, they say, evil is a necessary condition for the existence of good. Paul—an over-estimated theologian in the view of many of our contemporaries—will have none of this. Continue in sin, parley or compromise with Christ's arch-foe? How can we who died to sin, died in and with Christ, continue any longer therein? The new life we enjoy began in the death of the old nature, it is preserved and flourishes now only by the continuous use of that cross on which the old desires were crucified and by which they must still be mortified right on to the very last, when the body itself is put off and earthly temptations cease. The inner life is one of continual joyful self-crucifixion, the doing to death of all that in tendency threatens the supremacy of the higher and better self. The power of the Cross alone can free from the guilt and stain of the past, as in it alone is found the secret of a new, sacred, ineffable life, named in St. John's Gospel "eternal," in one of Paul's Epistles "life indeed."

It is named again life "in Christ." Bishop Westcott said that if all the labours of the Revisers for ten years had resulted in nothing but the liberating and exhibiting of the New Testament phrase *ἐν χριστῷ*, the time and labour would have been well spent. But the phrase "I in Christ" must be balanced by that other

sacred phrase, "Christ in me," if we would understand St. Paul and St. John—and Christ Himself—aright. "Abide in me" goes hand in hand with "and I in you." It is, happily, no part of my duty to expound the meaning of the *Unio Mystica* between the believer and his Lord. But I hold that Professor H. R. Mackintosh is abundantly justified when in a recent issue of the *Expositor* he pleads for the word "mystical" as indicating a deeper and closer union than the word "moral." The believer's union with Christ is "initiated on *His* side and sustained at every point by *His* power." Our connection with Christ does not consist in, nor is it exhausted by, "the conscious feelings and motives which pass through our minds." Christ holds me when I cannot consciously realize His presence, and "regeneration makes a man Christ's in a deeper fashion than he may ever dream." But the life initiated and sustained by the Lord must be cultivated and assimilated by the believer, or it dies down, and may die out. Here is the weakness of much which to-day goes by the name of religion. For without constant care and continuous effort that Divine Presence, which is one with, yet higher than, our own consciousness, and its uplifting power as it penetrates and transfigures without absorbing our own personality, cannot be realized, and it easily comes to be spoken and thought of as an empty dream. Nay, it is unreal and vain for all except those who have been initiated into the Master's secret, and these, be it ever remembered, are for the most part not the wise and prudent, but the babes who are wiser than they.

## IV

Some may be impatient of the ideas here imperfectly described, and represent them as abstract and unpractical, producing no actual, tangible results. They are greatly mistaken. As well might they describe nerve-action as fanciful and useless because it is not muscular. The shaping of the whole inner man is the first product of the inner life, and this is the one thing that will abide when all things earthly are fled away. The secret between Christ and the believer lies partly here, "I follow after, if that I may seize that for which Christ seized me." The new name that He gives, *i. e.* the new self that He is forming, forms the inscription on the white stone which is the pledge of His personal friendship, and none knows what that is but he who receives it. New thought, new light, new vision follow. Dante embodies the thought of many mediæval saints when he speaks of God as the mirror of the new life. For all things are now seen in God, God is seen in all things, and all things are seen as He sees them. What a revelation and what a revolution !

Other results follow that I am not called upon to trace. But the same acts wear an altogether different aspect, according as they are done by a man of this world, or by a man whose life is hid with Christ in God. The Father who sees in secret has many ways of rewarding His children openly which they themselves do not know. It is the unconscious shining of Moses' face after his sojourn on the Mount which produces a brilliance that others can neither understand nor imitate. There are many kinds of light, all valuable in their place ; but what the world wants from

the Christian upon moral, social, and high political questions is a distinctive, higher kind of light, such as never was on sea or land, which the true Christian alone can shed upon them. If the Church neglects her highest function for the sake of adding one more to the multitudinous cries vociferated round us in the modern Babel, the world will be impoverished and the Divine purpose unaccomplished.

Where real life exists manifestation will take care of itself. The underground river, fed from hidden springs, will emerge in due time as a clear, full stream, at which the nations may drink. The coral polyp builds steadily on under the water amidst the ceaseless beating of the surf, and ere long there appears above the surface the atoll reef with its waving palms and still lagoon. Realities have their own way of asserting themselves, even in a world of shadows often mistaken for realities. The hidden life is the most potent life, even amidst the half-lights of earth, and the time will come when the day will break and the shadows flee away. "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall we also with Him be manifested in glory."



## MYSTICAL RELIGION

*“We all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit.”*—2 COR. iii. 18.

*“And looke at last up to that Soveraine Light,  
From whose pure beams al perfect beauty springs:  
That kindleth love in every godly spright,  
Even the love of God, which loathing brings  
Of this vile world and these gay-seeming things,  
With whose sweet pleasures being so possest  
Thy straying thoughts henceforth for ever rest.”*

—SPENSER.

*“We begin by degrees to perceive that there are but two beings in the whole universe, our own soul and the God who made it.”*—J. H. NEWMAN.

*“Till your spirit filleth the whole world, and the stars are your jewels; till you are as familiar with the ways of God in all ages as with your walk and table . . . till you delight in God for being good to all—you never enjoy the world. The world is a mirror of infinite beauty, yet no man sees it. It is the Temple of Majesty, yet no man regards it. It is a reign of Light and Peace, did not men disquiet it. It is the place of angels and the gate of Heaven.”*—TRAHERNE.

## XVI

### MYSTICAL RELIGION

MAETERLINCK in one of his earlier essays says in a notable passage, "A spiritual epoch is perhaps upon us, an epoch to which certain analogies are found in history. For there are periods recorded when the soul in obedience to unknown laws seemed to rise to the very surface of humanity, whence it gave clearest evidence of its existence and its power. There are centuries in which the soul lies dormant and slumbers undisturbed . . . but to-day it is clearly making a mighty effort, and it would seem as though humanity were on the point of struggling from beneath the crushing burden of matter that weighs it down." Some readers of these words would say that in them the wish was father to the thought, and the hope they express too good to be realized. Materialism in fact, if not in theory, is, we are often told, in possession of the field; it beclouds our vision, clogs our aspirations and hampers our best activities. The soul of man, it might rather seem, in the beginning of the twentieth century, is still heavy with sleep, and though at times tossing uneasily in its slumbers, it is unable fully to open its eyes, or lift itself to face the light of day.

Broad generalizations on either side as to the spirit of the age are usually to be distrusted, but one significant fact will not be lost sight of by the careful observer—the striking revival of interest in Mysticism. It is as difficult to keep the word out of current dis-

cussions on religion as to keep the word Socialism out of politics. Twenty years ago in this country both names seemed to belong to the kingdom of the air, practical Englishmen had little use for either. But as "we are all Socialists now," so now we are all supposed to understand that Mysticism is of the very essence of religion. "Every one is something of a mystic; no one is nothing but a mystic," wrote Father Tyrrell in what was probably his last essay, published only since his death. The ideas of vague speculation and dreamy futility that had attached to the name have now given place to keen appreciation of its vitality and importance. Special attention is paid to any living voices that can speak with authority on the subject, while there is a growing desire to know more of the history of Mystical religion in the past and forecast its prospects for the future.

Thus the pendulum of popular opinion on great topics swings to and fro generation after generation, and refuses at any stage to remain still in a position of central equilibrium. But the curiosity of to-day is hardly more intelligent than the apathy or contempt of yesterday. Mysticism is still too little understood. Confusion prevails even among experts on the subject, so that a student who would begin by defining his terms finds his authorities almost hopelessly at variance. Noack, the author of one of the best treatises in German on the mysticism of the Middle Ages, defines it as "formless speculation," and R. A. Vaughan, one of the best-known writers on the subject in this country, defines it as "that form of error which mistakes for a Divine manifestation the operations of merely human faculties." Again, whilst Troilo's definition of mysticism is "a pallid fluctuating phantasmagoria which takes the place of reality," Pfleiderer

describes it as "nothing but the fundamental feeling of religion . . . the religious life at its very heart and centre." With him stands Edward Caird—surely no visionary—who speaks of it as "religion in its most concentrated and exclusive form, that attitude of man in which all other relations are swallowed up in the relation of the soul to God." If this be true, we are not surprised to find another writer describing "dogmatic as the skeleton," mysticism as the "life-blood of the Christian body"; whilst Dr. Inge thinks the shortest definition ever suggested one of the best—"Mysticism is the love of God."<sup>1</sup>

It would appear after all that Professor Pringle-Pattison is nearest the mark amidst this chaos of opinions when he says in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Mysticism is a phase of thought, perhaps rather of feeling, which from its very nature is hardly susceptible of exact definition." But in the excellent article from which that sentence is taken, an article worth many longer treatises, the writer shows that it is exact definition alone that is lacking. He describes Mysticism on its philosophical or speculative side as "the endeavour of the human mind to grasp the Divine essence or the ultimate reality of things"; while on its religious and practical side it is "the enjoyment and blessedness of actual communion with the Highest." The words that follow are most illuminating, and in our opinion touch the very heart of the subject—"The thought that is most intensely present with the mystic is that of a supreme, all-pervading and indwelling power in which all things are one." The fact is that in English one word is made to cover several meanings. In German *Mystik* is used in a

<sup>1</sup> It is attributed by Joly in his *Psychology of the Saints* to Abbé Huvelin. See pp. 37, 38.

good sense to indicate the legitimate share which feeling possesses in the constitution of the religious life, while *Mysticismus* denotes the one-sided and excessive development of a religious principle in itself sound enough. It is clear that careful discrimination is necessary if one name is to include Montanists and Methodists—pseudo-Dionysius and George Fox—St. Francis, Meister Eckhart, and Swedenborg—Scotus Erigena, Jacob Böhme, William Law, and William Blake; and if Neo-Platonists, Anabaptists, and Moravians are all alike to find shelter under the comprehensive hospitality of this one roof.

The questions thus raised are not merely historical and academic. Scholars may be left to discuss the most appropriate classification of thinkers in the past. The Christian minister of to-day wishes to know how it comes to pass that the same convenient name of "mystic" is given to preachers so different from one another as Alexander Whyte and R. J. Campbell: whether both are right or both are wrong; or, if one be right and the other wrong, how far the mysticism of either is responsible for the result, and why. A brief answer to these questions is not easy to gain. Many books have been published on the subject during the last decade, of which two are specially noteworthy. Baron von Hügel's treatise on *The Mystical Element of Religion* runs to nearly a thousand closely printed pages and is largely concerned with Catherine of Genoa, whilst the learned and exceedingly able analysis of mystical processes which concludes his second volume is written in so involved and technical a style that the average reader can hardly be expected to toil through it. Professor Rufus Jones's *Studies in Mystical Religion* are mainly historical. He surveys the movements in the Christian Church, which

may properly be described as mystical, from primitive times to the seventeenth century, though the treatment of the Reformation period is avowedly scanty, in view of companion volumes subsequently to appear. Dr. Inge—whose volume of Bampton Lectures of 1899 remains on the whole the most useful guide for the English student of Christian Mysticism—has in his Margaret Lectures of 1906 described a few English mystics in a popular, but not superficial, fashion. His list includes Juliana of Norwich, Walter Hylton, and William Law, together with chapters on Wordsworth and Browning. The introductory Lecture on the Psychology of Mysticism is the most valuable in the volume.

## I

Our present object is briefly to indicate some of the widely differing tendencies which go under the general name of Mysticism, to discriminate between them, inquiring how much they have in common and where they diverge, criticizing each according to the direction, desirable or otherwise, in which they respectively move. It will be convenient to begin by delimitating the subject.

In its widest sense the name Mysticism is employed to describe the sense of the Infinite, of a relation to a Being within, above, and around us—the transcendental element which belongs to philosophy, literature, and art as well as to religion—so far as this is realized in personal experience. Hence Mysticism has been found in Spinoza and Hegel, Burne-Jones and Holman Hunt, as well as in Augustine and John of the Cross. Harnack says of Neo-Platonism, “The instinctive certainty that there is an eternal highest good

lying beyond all outer experience, and yet not an intelligible good—this feeling and the accompanying conviction of the entire worthlessness of all earthly things, were produced and fostered by Neo-Platonism. . . . It begot the consciousness that the only blessedness which can satisfy the heart must be found elsewhere than in the sphere of the reason. That man does not live by bread alone, is a truth that was known before Neo-Platonism; but it proclaimed the deeper truth, which the earlier philosophy had failed to recognize, that man does not live by knowledge alone.”<sup>1</sup> So far Neo-Platonism was mystical. It was not content to abide by the Arabian distinction between Abul Khain the mystic and Abu Ali Seena the philosopher. When these conferred together, on parting the philosopher said, “All that he sees, I know,” and the mystic said, “All that he knows, I see.” The true mystic claims to “see” much more than any philosopher can “know.” But Neo-Platonism “led nowhere.” It exalted feeling at the expense of thought, and its disciples were lost in a sea of vague emotion, whilst Spinoza and Hegel identify thought with reality and may be described as rationalists rather than mystics. Only in a general sense can the term be applied to poets like Spenser and Wordsworth, to the suggestive symbolism of the artist Watts, or to transcendental moralists like Emerson.

Mysticism is properly religious. By this we mean that neither art nor philosophy nor literature can fill out the proper connotation of the term. The mystic does not merely reach forth towards the transcendental; he has been brought into immediate contact with it by personal experience, and to the Infinite he

<sup>1</sup> *Dogmen-Geschichte*, Vol. I, p. 725. Eng. Trans., Vol. I, p. 344, 345.

gives the name God. True, that sacred term may be very differently interpreted. It is very variously understood by the Pantheist of the Vedanta, the Sufist of Persia, and the Buddhist seeker after the Way. That which all mystical religionists possess in common is a reaction of the soul against ceremonialism and dogmatism, and a pressing after direct communion with the great Object of all worship. The mystic professes to find where others only seek, to enjoy and appropriate by direct communion that which ordinary men are acquainted with only by the hearing of the ear.

The Christian believes that what other religious systems strive after, Christianity alone attains in its completeness. He is not concerned to deny the value of the hints and suggestions given by poets and philosophers; he recognizes that in the religions of the world God has not left Himself without witness, but has "made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth . . . that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him"; but that in and through Christ vital union with the only true God is made possible for all, even for the disobedient and evil. The Christian student prefers in this instance to define by type, not by history. He takes the ideal of what Mysticism ought at its best to be, not the unworthy vagaries in which professed votaries have indulged under cover of a noble name. As in attempting to define religion, we are lost if we seek to include under one general term all the historical manifestations that have claimed the name. It is preferable to ask what is the "nature" of religion as indicated by its highest capacities and potentialities, disregarding the excesses and extravagances by which ignorant and fanatical disciples have often disgraced

the religious character. From this point of view direct communion with God is possible and has been partially attained by many, the true way of full-orbed realization, free both from excess and defect, being found in Christ and Christianity. Hence Dr. R. C. Moberly says, "It is Christ who is the true mystic; or, if the mode of expression be preferred, it is He who has realized all that Mysticism and the mystics have aimed at. . . . In Him this perfect realization means a harmony, a sanity, a fitly proportioned completeness. . . . The real truth of Christian Mysticism is in fact the doctrine, or rather the experience, of the Holy Ghost. It is the realization of human personality as characterized by, and consummated in, the indwelling reality of the Spirit of Christ, which is God."<sup>1</sup>

But as some definitions have proved too wide, others have been too narrow. The term is employed by Roman and Anglo-Catholics of "mystical theology" and "mystical interpretation of Scripture." The former is sometimes identified with ascetical theology, the science which treats of virtues and perfections and the means by which these are to be attained. The experimental side of the subject deals, says a high Roman Catholic authority, with "a pure knowledge of God which the soul ordinarily receives in a luminous darkness or obscure light of sublime contemplation, together with an experimental love so intimate that the soul, losing itself altogether, is united to God and transformed into Him." Mystical Theology is a science which considers "the acts of the experimental, according to the authority of the Scriptures and the contemplative saints, giving practical guidance for

<sup>1</sup> *Atonement and Personality*, pp. 312, 314. We have slightly altered the order of the sentences.

those on the way to attain high contemplation." It is clear that Roman Catholicism here assumes that which it is our chief object to examine and understand. By the "mystical" interpretation of Scripture is to be understood the system of allegorizing. This kind of exegesis distinguishes the "literal" from the "spiritual" meaning of Scripture and professes to penetrate through the husk of names and symbols to an inner kernel of spiritual realities. But the method is in itself so doubtful, and in some of its results—the treatment of the Song of Songs, for example—so mischievous, that it should be considered apart.

Disregarding, then, for the present the side-currents of tendencies in ancient and modern philosophy on the one hand and on the other the extravagances into which Christian mysticism has too often been betrayed, we may fasten attention on its main feature as described by Professor Pringle-Pattison. "The mystic maintains the possibility of direct intercourse with this Being of beings—not through external media such as historical revelation, oracles, answers to prayer and the like, but by a species of ecstatic transformation or identification in which the individual becomes in very truth 'partaker of the Divine nature.' God ceases to be an object to him and becomes an experience." Or, as Dr. Inge puts it, "Mysticism is an attempt to realize the presence of the living God in the soul and in nature; or, more generally, the attempt to realize in thought and feeling the immanence of the temporal in the eternal, and of the eternal in the temporal." Professor Rufus Jones somewhat more happily phrases it as "that type of religion which puts emphasis on immediate awareness of relation with God, on direct and intimate consciousness of the Divine presence. It is religion in its most acute, intense, and living

stage." It is especially, we may add, a search for the Divine within us, guided by an inward light of God in the soul, rather than a revelation from without in nature or in history. This knowledge being obviously difficult to express, Mysticism largely uses symbols to set forth its meaning. These, however, only too easily lose their original significance and may be mechanically and unintelligently employed. The type of devout feeling thus indicated is, when sound, the pith and core of all true religion and pre-eminently of Christianity, but as it is capable of perversion and abuse, we proceed to inquire as to its legitimate application and its healthy and harmonious realization.

## II

The chief value of Baron von Hügel's work—apart from its erudite investigation into the life and teaching of Catherine of Genoa—lies in the analysis of religion given by the author and the place assigned to Mysticism in relation to it. In a philosophical introduction and again at the close of the whole investigation—see I. 51 foll. and II. 387—Baron von Hügel describes three great forces of the soul, with three great elements of religion corresponding to them. These are (1) sense and memory, by which we picture and remember sights and scenes and symbols to express thoughts and feelings supplied by society, tradition, and environment. With this corresponds the external, authoritative, historical, traditional and institutional side and function of religion. (2) The force by which we rationalize, analyze, and synthesize; by which we weigh, compare, and combine details and harmonize them in an intelligible whole. With this correspond the critical-historical and syn-

thetic-philosophical elements of religion, resulting in positive and dogmatic theology. (3) Last and highest come intuition, feeling, and volition. In this region, by means of a dim but direct sense and feeling, we gain an immediate experience of Objective Reality, the Infinite and Abiding Spirit which penetrates and works within the finite spirit and in the world at large. We are thus brought to the Mystical and directly operative element of religion—the Experimental.

Each of these three elements of religion is capable of being carried to excess, and of this the history of religion furnishes abundant examples. An exaggerated insistence on the first leads to a preponderance of the objective, institutional ecclesiastical element, as in Judaism, heathen Rome, Eastern Christianity and especially the sacerdotalism and sacramentalism of the Church of Rome. The second element when perverted issues in Rationalism, as illustrated by the Sadducees in the time of Christ, and the *Aufklärung* of the eighteenth century, in the critical processes of which the heart of religion was eaten out and its deepest essence destroyed. But the third element also is capable of perversion, when it becomes Emotional Fanaticism; illustrated sometimes in an extreme asceticism as in the Fathers of the Desert, sometimes in excesses and immoralities, as in the case of the Anabaptists of Munster. The three elements, however, are always found more or less fully in combination; there is no example of either, taken purely and alone. Von Hügel traces the development of each in the various ages of man—childhood, youth, and maturity; in various races, such as the Latin and the Teutonic; in the leading historical religions, which show sometimes one element predominating, sometimes another. The treatment given to this part of

the subject is for the most part excellent, though some of the illustrations are strained and fanciful.

But it is clear that the soul can only attain full development when due proportion is observed in the characteristics of its religion. If the "Historical-Institutional" element possesses affinities with legal, social, and political history; if the "Critical-Speculative" element is cognate with philosophical insight and general intellectual advance; the "Mystical-Operative" element utilizes chiefly the emotional and volitional gifts peculiar to certain ages and peoples and lays special stress on experience and character. It vindicates the importance of direct experience of God as against mere traditional orthodoxies and religious habits and ceremonies which in themselves are but means of grace. So also it lays stress on personal experience as against mere intellectual reasoning on finite data which can only result in human generalizations and cannot reach to the Infinite. None the less it is dangerous to rely on separate, individual, self-supported personal experience. Von Hügel calls this "Exclusive" Mysticism, and shows how one-sided and misleading it becomes through ignoring other important elements of soul-nature. He shows, in unnecessarily technical language, how the individual soul depends for the fulness and healthiness of even the most purely mystical acts and states upon "its past and present contacts with the Contingent, Temporal, and Spacial, and with social facts and elements," as well as upon its inward concentration and direct contact with the Infinite within and around it. Only thus does Mysticism attain to its full significance and real power. This consists in being, "not everything in any one soul, but something in every soul of man" and in its

amplest development it presents in specially gifted natures what in some degree and form is present in every truly human soul. Thus "Pure" Mysticism, as Von Hügel not very happily styles it, becomes false Mysticism, whilst "Partial" or "Inclusive" Mysticism retains the strength and avoids the weaknesses and dangers of the "Exclusive" type by maintaining alliance with all parts of a man's nature and all the sides of his life.

Without accepting this analysis as adequate and exhaustive, we may learn much from it. It would be perhaps more satisfactory to describe Mysticism proper as the experience of the Soul or Self as a whole, with intellectual, emotional, and volitional elements, each needing to be kept in its place. The same may be said of Von Hügel's "seven pairs of weaknesses and strength," which he considers to be characteristic of mystical religion. He shows how the mystic is strong and joyful in his inward, contemplative life and weak in his neglect of the absolutely necessary contact of mind and will with the things of sense; how he delights in "all that approximates most nearly to Simultaneity and Eternity," but is apt to be defective and unsatisfactory in his attention to the successive and temporal presented by history. Under five other similar pairs of categories the author works out his ideas in an interesting and highly elaborate way. We may attempt in humbler and simpler fashion to point out some of the dangers, as well as the inestimable value, of the Mystical Element in religion.

### III

One notable danger is on the side of Pantheism. *Corruptio optimi pessima.* The higher that man tries

to climb, the greater is his danger if he fall. The mystic who seeks to attain direct communion and close union with the Deity must beware; the waxen wings of Icarus melt long before he approaches the glowing splendours of the sun. If the danger of full-fledged Pantheism is a real one, constantly recurring in history, the danger of Pantheistical tendencies is still greater. Serious mischief may be done without accepting Pantheism in its logical completeness and vigour; the sweep of the outer currents of a whirlpool may easily carry away and drown a swimmer who is not sucked down and overwhelmed in its very vortex. Such truth as lies in the heart of Pantheism a genuine Theist must ever seek to maintain. He believes in the Divine immanence in nature and in man, as well as the possibility of direct unmediated communion with the Godhead, but he must beware lest he "strive to wind himself too high for sinful man beneath the sky." The Pantheist boldly asserts that God is All and All is God. These two statements are not identical. They imply respectively (1) that God is the Whole, the Substance of which all finite beings are particulars; and (2) that every part of the universe belongs to the essence of God, who is equally manifested in all details. The Theist may stop far short of this extreme position and yet be in danger of error. The mystic always rests on the fundamental position that "God's all, man's nought," without sufficiently considering that—

"Also God, whose pleasure brought  
Man into being, stands away  
As it were a handbreadth off, to give  
Room for the newly made to live,  
And look at Him from a place apart,  
And use his gifts of brain and heart,  
Given indeed, but to keep for ever."

It is the lack of belief in a *personal* God that constitutes the essence of Pantheism, and in our own day the difficulty of realizing the true personality of God is felt by many very keenly. "Any philosophy," says Dr. Flint, a high authority on Theism, "which is in thorough earnest to show that God is the Ground of all existence must find it difficult to retain a firm grasp of the personality and transcendence of the Divine." So, we may add, any religious man who considers the end of religion to be, not the knowing God, fearing, trusting and obeying Him, but the being able by transcendent experience to enjoy immediate and complete *union* with the Source of all knowledge and grace, must find it difficult to preserve a due sense of man's apartness and alienation from God, all relations seeming to him poor and distant compared with a present realization of ineffable union with Him who is the Ground and Goal of all being.

Hence we are not surprised to find in the history of even Christians that a strong Pantheistical current has been present throughout, flowing from Neo-Platonism, through the pseudo-Dionysius into the mediæval Church, very marked in Scotus Erigena and appearing more faintly in Eckhart and Tauler. The mystic longing for unity easily loses sight of the transcendence of God in His immanence; insisting on the death of self, he finds his consummation in absorption into Deity; believing that it is possible for him to slip the fetters of space and time, his world-view tends to obliterate the distinction between God and the creature. A man may go as far as this in practice without accepting the full Pantheistic position. The latter, indeed, so far from being exceptionally religious, is, strictly speaking, destructive of religion. Rauwenhoff says, "Only in name is Pantheism a religious

position at all, it is a simple view of the world, not a religious conception." Professor Wallace in his Gifford Lectures puts the matter thus: "The religious man aims at a growing and increasing divinity or likeness to God; if this likeness reach its ideal limit in identity with the Divine nature, then it is no longer strictly to be entitled religion." He who begins by making God all, ends by making Him nothing. He who strives to rise above reason shall find himself fall outside of reason; he who would raise human nature above itself to make it divine, will find that he has only lowered the Divine to the human level. Eckhart, whom Dr. Inge calls "the greatest of all speculative mystics," is a conspicuous offender in the use of dangerous phraseology, which yet falls short of theoretical Pantheism. In his view the Godhead is the abiding potentiality of being, containing in itself all distinctions as yet undeveloped. As all the phenomenal world comes from God, so all goes back to Him again. The human soul is a microcosm which in a manner contains all things. "At the apex of the mind there is a Divine scintilla, or spark, which is so closely akin to God that it is one with Him and not merely united to Him." This is the organ by which our personality holds communion with the Divine Being, so that "the eye with which I see God is the same as that with which He sees me." Dr. Inge says that this "un-created spark" is really the same as the grace of God, but the change of phrase indicates a changed point of view; in Eckhart the grace of God is God Himself acting. Thus Teresa says, "In the beginning I did not know that God is present in all things. . . . Unlearned men used to tell me that He was present only by His grace. I could not believe that. A most learned Dominican told me that He was present Him-

self—this was a great comfort to me" (see Von Hügel, ii. 324).

The language of true Christian religion is not Pantheistic, but Panentheistic; that is, it does not obliterate the distinction between the Divine and the human, but emphasizes the reality and intimacy of the Divine indwelling where the necessary conditions are duly complied with. Even this doctrine, says Dr. Inge, which is an integral part of Christianity, may be so taught as to lead to error. "In proportion as the indwelling of God, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit, in the heart of man is regarded as an *opus operatum*, or as a complete substitution of the Divine for the human, we are in danger of a self-deification which resembles the maddest phases of Pantheism."

#### IV

A kindred danger of Mysticism is that of dispensing with all mediators and mediation. The Society of Friends reject sacraments and lay slight stress on the use of Scriptures. But some mediæval mystics would dispense with Christ Himself as Mediator, or at least would pass beyond Him to the Absolute, using Him as a mere step to a higher grade of spiritual attainment. Christians of this type dwell much on the doctrine of the Spirit—an excellent feature in any theology, when it is not carried to excess. But at the time of the Reformation dangers were rife at this very point. Of Sebastian Frank, Luther said in his uncompromising fashion, "I will not even answer such men, I despise them too much. If my nose does not deceive me, he is an enthusiast or spiritualist, who is content with nothing but spirit, spirit, spirit, and cares not at all for Bible, Sacrament or Preaching." Some of the best mystics dwell upon

the doctrine of Christ in us rather than Christ for us so emphatically that they find little need of Christ at all except as a pattern of self-sacrifice. When Ruysbroek writes, "Contemplative men should rise above reason and distinction, beyond their created substance and gaze perpetually by the aid of their inborn light, so that they become transformed, and one with the same light by means of which they see, and which they see," it is clear that as a Christian he is out of his depth and is in danger of being submerged in a sea of religiosity. The thought of the sinner saved by grace alone has vanished out of sight. But the history of Christendom shows only too clearly and painfully that the one safeguard of true holiness in heart and life is to preserve this central truth of evangelical Christianity supreme unto the end.

Two opposite tendencies were present in mediæval Mysticism which have been called subjective and objective. The subjective type became "entangled in theories which sublimate matter till only a shadow remains," whilst objective Mysticism emphasizes and finds chief delight in palpable supernatural manifestations. Curiously enough these strongly contrasted tendencies which led men to the most widely separated extremes of thought resulted in similar evils in practice. Just as the earlier Gnosticism led in one direction to extreme asceticism and in another to unbridled self-indulgence, so mystical teaching may lead either to contempt of the world by the pathway of pure contemplation, or may result in excessive attention to rites and ceremonies as the vehicles whereby higher spiritual knowledge and experience are to be attained. Both are seen in the monasticism of the Middle Ages. The *unio mystica* of the monk

implied such immediate vision of God that the eye must be closed to the phenomenal world, the intellect and will must be laid asleep; and the world of nature and of man was viewed as full of evil, tempting the soul away from God. "The beauty of nature was ignored, the beauty of woman was a snare and a temptation"; hence two main sources of higher knowledge were closed, two chief methods of rising to intercourse with Infinite love and goodness were shut out as in themselves dangerous and evil. The God of such a devotee is a blank. The highest spiritual condition is described as "The obscure night of the soul," detachment from all earthly light is so complete. The "three silences of the soul," as taught by Molinos, are well known and form the theme of one of Longfellow's sonnets. These are, the silence of words, of desires, and of thoughts. "In the last and highest the mind is a blank and God alone speaks to the soul." In point of fact, when man seeks thus to abstract himself from appointed sources of Divine knowledge, if he hears a voice at all, it is often not that of God, but of the devil. Fénelon guarded against the practical dangers implied in some of the teaching of Catherine of Genoa and Madame Guyon, though at the expense of his own logical consistency. He had the good sense and the piety to perceive that the line and plummet of logic could not sound the depths of the ocean of the Divine love, or even man's apprehension and enjoyment of that love in its length and breadth and depth and height.

The mystic of another type is prone to sacramentalism. He lays excessive stress upon the symbols which to him are sacred vehicles of Divine grace and channels of Divine life. Dr. Inge finds even in St. Paul and St. John traces of "that psycho-physical

theory which demands that the laws of the spiritual world shall have their analogous manifestations in the world of phenomena." This connection between the spiritual and the material is, according to the mystic, not arbitrary or accidental, it is based on the life that is within life. The "correspondences" of Swedenborg form a conspicuous illustration of this doctrine. Its dangers are as obvious as its beauty and suggestiveness. But the field opened up by the use and abuse of symbols is far too wide to be entered upon here.

## V

If Mysticism be preserved from these and other perversions and aberrations, it seems impossible to lay too great stress on its value and importance. Even to enumerate its services to religious thought and life would need considerable space. For (1) it lays stress upon personal experience. It finds the essence of religion, not in knowledge, not in feeling, not in mere conduct, but in direct contact with spiritual realities. (2) It constitutes the vital principle of all spiritual religion, and has again and again shown its inherent power of accomplishing a reformation in times of religious decadence and degeneration. Even when alloyed with serious faults, as in the case of Montanism, it has uttered an effective protest against the numbing influences of formalism and ecclesiasticism. The sixteenth and eighteenth are not the only centuries in which an evangelical revival has found its life and energy in the principles of "mystical," or, as many would prefer to say, "experimental," religion. (3) It vindicates the sphere of the transcendental. The World beyond the world so

easily fades from view. "The world is too much with us," so much with us that men assure themselves there is nothing beyond it, and the Church has often lost the sense of its true vocation as a witness to the Life which is above life. Thirty or forty years ago all witness of this kind was laughed to scorn by many "philosophers" and nearly all men of science. The present generation has experienced a wholesome reaction against the tyranny of materialism. The influence of such men as Professor William James and Sir Oliver Lodge has reached where sermons and avowedly religious lectures would be powerless. That glimpses into a higher region than that of space and time are possible for men here and now has been testified to in hundreds of instances, of which the recorded experiences of Tennyson and J. A. Symonds are notable examples. Mystics of all creeds unite here; and the strong and sane vindication of the reality and paramount importance of the spiritual world which these have furnished is one notable sign of the times—outside, as well as inside the pale of the Churches.

But (4) the immense practical energy which mystics have infused into the Church must never be forgotten. General Gordon was described as "a practical mystic," but he by no means stands alone. If real service to the world be considered, rather than the kind of service which the world as such desires, practical mystics must be accounted the rule, not the exception. Professor Rufus Jones well says, "Far from being the unpractical, dreamy persons they are too often conceived to have been, mystics have weathered storms, endured conflicts, and lived through waterspouts which would have overwhelmed souls whose anchor did not reach beyond the veil. . . .

They have been spiritual leaders, they are the persons who shifted the levels of life for the race." This heightening of power for service can only come from above to those whose souls are prepared for supernal influences. Where ability to serve in some capacity or other is not increased by communion with the Highest, the reality of such communion may be questioned. For the proof of this we should not point so much to those rare, choice spirits who have been finely touched for finest issues, but rather to the working of true experimental religion in average men and women. The healing of the world lies in the hands of its nameless saints. As Professor Jones says, "There are multitudes of men and women in out-of-the-way places, in backwoods, towns and uneventful farms, who are the salt of the earth and the light of the world in their communities, because they have had experiences which revealed to them Realities that their neighbours missed, and powers to live by which the mere 'church-goers' failed to find." The chief mistake of Professor James's fruitful volume on the *Varieties of Religious Experience* is that the author builds so largely on the morbid experiences of exceptional persons—the hysterical and neurotic, the fanatical and eccentric. To understand the working of any force, its ordinary, not its extraordinary, operations must be examined. In this case particularly it is necessary to ask, What heightening of the powers, if any, is produced by the inward experiences of mystical religion, when there is no exceptional genius to work upon on the one hand, nor any ill-balanced and nervously excitable temperament on the other? The whole case may safely be rested on the answer to this question. That sense of partaking in a higher life, of being flooded by waves of broader

influence from beyond, which marks the "inspiration" of the artist, belongs in a still loftier degree to the mystic. When the self as a whole, including mind and body, feeling and will, is pressed into the service of a Higher Self who pervades and sustains and uplifts the whole nature of a man, it were a marvel if spiritual energy in practical life were not generated. "Where there is no vision, the people perish," or "cast off restraint," says the wise man. For spiritual insight furnishes both stimulus and orderly control. The spirits of the prophets should always be subject to the prophets; and when that is the case other spirits are subject to them also.

"Tasks in hours of insight willed  
May be in hours of gloom fulfilled."

False mysticism may produce disorder, true mystical religion develops a divinely controlled and ordered energy which becomes a very fount and spring of beneficent service.

## VI

Few better illustrations of the whole subject, with its blending of light and shade, could be found than those connected with the life and work of John Wesley. With a brief reference to examples familiar to the memories of many of our readers this article may well be brought to a close. The spiritual crisis which changed the current of Wesley's religious life determined, as has often been pointed out, the character of Methodism. This word, when first used as a nickname at Oxford, bore a very different meaning. It was given to the members of the Holy Club because they laid so much stress on means and methods, the externals of religion. And whilst

Wesley and his companions were undoubtedly divinely moved from the first and the activities of the mission in Georgia were prompted by earnest religious feeling, Wesley so far changed his views after the experiences of 1738 that he questioned whether he were indeed a true Christian before then. The religion which he taught his followers and which so mightily moved the people wherever he went was not the rigid asceticism and laboured obedience of his earliest ministry, but the mystical religion which took its rise in the room in Aldersgate Street. He was influenced, as he himself has told us, by à Kempis and Taylor, Behmen and Spenser, and especially by William Law. But it was the teaching of the Moravians that moved him most deeply and changed him most effectually. Humanly speaking, if he had not met Peter Böhler the stream of his life would have flowed down a different channel. In the eyes of the historian, as well as of the casual observer, Wesley's Methodism is one of the best examples of Mysticism known.

Yet we find Wesley inveighing against the mystics in vehement terms. They are of all enemies to Christianity the most dangerous. "They stab it in the vitals." The whole of Behmenism is "sublime nonsense, inimitable bombast, fustian not to be paralleled." The mystic writers are "one great anti-christ." Luther's *Galatians*, esteemed a classic of Protestant religion, is condemned by Wesley as "shallow, muddy and confused," because it is "deeply tinctured with Mysticism and hence often dangerously wrong." Here is a clear illustration of the need of first defining our terms. Wesley was charged by the sober-minded Anglicans of his time with "enthusiasm," an accusation which he indig-

nantly repudiated; he passed on the indictment and in still more emphatic terms denounced now Zinzendorf and his followers, now the "French prophets," now Luther and now Behmen, as if their mystical enthusiasm made them to be worse than infidels. If Mysticism meant Quietism, Antinomianism, or fanaticism of any kind, Wesley would give it no quarter. But if it is understood to mean immediate, experimental knowledge of God and Divine things obtained through Christ and the operation of the Holy Spirit in the heart, it was the very life-blood of Wesley's religion and the secret of his success as an evangelist. The *Christian Library* in fifty volumes, which represents Wesley's chosen anthology from Christian divines of all ages, is rich in mystical treatises. It contains selections from Fénelon, Molinos, and William Law, whilst Wesley himself published a *Life of Madame Guyon* and often quotes writers of her school approvingly. He aimed, as he says in one of his letters, at retaining the good that is in them "without the dross, which is often not only useless, but dangerous." Wesley's eminently sane, self-controlled, and practical mind was not attracted by the emotional extravagances which often disfigured genuinely evangelical Mysticism, whilst his passion for righteousness, for thorough Scriptural holiness of heart and life, prompted him to denounce in unmeasured terms the Antinomian errors which in his judgment were making Christ the minister of sin and turning the very grace of God into lasciviousness.

But Wesley's Methodism is mystical to the core. His definition of saving faith and the stress which he himself always laid upon the crisis of May 1738 prove that in his judgment the essence of religion

lay not in creed, not in worship, not in conduct, but in inward personal experience. For better, for worse, his followers have followed him in this. That this principle was in the main right, true, and both world-healing and world-purifying, history has proved. That it also carries in its train dangers against which the utmost watchfulness can with difficulty prevail, history has also proved. But the dangers which attended the movement in Wesley's lifetime and since do not attach to the doctrine as he taught it. The way in which he preached Christian perfection is a proof of this. So many are the safeguards, fences, and cautions with which Wesley surrounds his description of the state and the way to reach it, that many of his opponents say that, whilst explaining, he has explained it away. This is not really the case, as every candid student of Wesley's teaching concerning this loftiest of attainable Christian experiences must admit. But there is *prima facie* ground for the objection, and the whole of Wesley's "Plain Account" furnishes an instructive example of the way in which a great Christian mystic set to work to prune a too luxuriant plant of leaves and branches which in his judgment were deleterious to the growth and highest productiveness of a fruitful vine. That his teaching has been misrepresented in controversy and often perverted in practice is not surprising, but no saner enthusiasm, no more practical Mysticism, is to be found in the whole history of mystical religion than that of John Wesley.

The result of our brief examination into the meaning of a much-abused word has been to demonstrate the difficulty, if not impossibility, of defining exactly so elastic a term, so protean a spirit, as that of Mysticism. Professor W. James's "four marks"—

ineffability, noetic quality, transciency and passivity—prove little or no better than the “marks” of other writers. To say that the mystical sense defies expression; that it implies states of knowledge, which, however, speedily pass away; and that it includes the obedience of the will to a superior power which grasps and sways it, does not leave us with a very clear idea of what the essence of mystical experiences is. The reason for this vagueness is that Professor James desires to make his definition widely comprehensive and not distinctively religious. Lectures 16 and 17 in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* deserve and will repay careful study, but they illustrate the wisdom of Pringle-Pattison’s refusal to frame an exact definition of Mysticism which we quoted earlier in this article. A critic who has a passion for accurate definition must first subdivide mystical doctrines and movements into their several classes and then provide each with its appropriate label. No one form of words can suffice to characterize the almost infinite variety of mystical teachers and movements to be found in the history of Christianity alone.

Perhaps this elasticity, versatility, or variety of adaptation furnishes one reason why Mysticism never dies. There is “nothing of it that doth fade, but doth suffer a sea-change into something rich and strange.” Mystical utterances possess, as W. James phrases it, “an eternal unanimity which ought to make a critic stop and think, and which brings it about that the mystical classics have, as has been said, neither birthday nor native land. Perpetually telling of the unity of man with God, their speech antedates languages and they do not grow old.” In the “infirmaries of the human soul, where all thoughts

come day by day to die," says Maeterlinck, "you will not find a single mystic thought." The true mystic thinks, lives and acts *sub specie eternitatis*; he "feels through all this earthly dress, bright shoots of everlastingness." It is these which preserve his life and teaching and influence from perishing with the changing years. Hence his words—

"have power to make  
Our noisy years seem moments in the being  
Of the Eternal Silence; truths that wake  
To perish never;  
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,  
Nor Man nor Boy,  
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,  
Can utterly abolish or destroy!"

He who, in the phrase of that quintessential volume of Christian Mysticism, the *Theologia Germanica*, "is to the Eternal Goodness what his hand is to a man," need fear no touch of change, no disintegration of decay. To him the Eternal is as time and time is as Eternity. For here and always he enjoys that life which begins, and has no end, in God. For him the light of true mystical union with the Abiding One has dawned in its tranquil splendour, and the shadows cast by the transient, the imperfect, and the unworthy have passed away for ever.

THE END



**DATE DUE**

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